A short history of the Hootenanny Mass & other absurdities

Rev. Know it all

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Chapter 1

Dear Rev. Know it all...

November 13, 2010

Dear Rev. Know it all,

Can you explain why all of a sudden we stopped singing Gregorian chant and started singing Kumbaya at Mass and now we have stopped singing Kumbaya and now we are singing dreary Gregorian chant again. I miss those old, traditional hymns with stirring music and lyrics that we could all sing and understand, words like "eat His body, drink His blood, and we'll sing a song of love, halelu, halelu, halelu-u-yah" written by the immortal Ray Repp. I am so confused.

Yours, Harold "Hoot" and Annie Gibson

Dear "Hoot" and Annie,

Of course I can, but it will be very long and very boring and you will have to pay attention. The problem begins in 1300 AD, more or less with Philip the Fair, king of France and Edward I "Longshanks" of England (who disemboweled Mel Gibson in the movie "Braveheart"). They were at war over the province of Gascony and to finance the war they both wanted to tax the clergy and the Church. Pope Boniface VIII said "Over my dead body!" and King Philip of France said, "That could be arranged."

So, Philip tried to kidnap the Pope, but merely managed to have him beat up by thugs on September 7, 1303. He died a month later. The cardinals elected an Italian, Benedict XI, who managed to survive eight months, so the cardinals thought they should elect somebody who could get along with the king of France. They chose a fellow named Raymond Bertrand de Got who was not at the election. He wasn't even a cardinal, nor was he in Rome at the time. He was in France. This was reasonable because he was, in fact, French.

The cardinals thought he would be neutral and make nice with the king. He was crowned pope in a grand ceremony attended by the King in Lyons, France. He never quite made it to Rome, the city of which he was now bishop. He got as far as Avignon, now part of France, then owned by the king of Sicily. And there they stayed until, seven popes later, Pope Gregory XI was elected in 1370. He was pope until 1378, and was the last of the Avignon Popes. His return to Rome on January 17, 1377 was inspired by the prophecies of St. Catherine of Siena.

Problem solved? Hardly! This is where things get really bad. After the death of Pope Gregory XI, an Italian, Urban VI was elected. He had some odd ideas about cardinals, like avoiding gratuities and gifts, and accepting salaries from kings and noblemen and limiting luxuries and retinues, and the multiple benefices (clerical sources of revenue). And he refused to move back to Avignon, which irritated King Charles V of France. The cardinals were deeply insulted and five months after Urban's election, the French cardinals met at Anagni, to declare his election invalid because they had been intimidated by the Roman mob (which can, in fact, be intimidating) into electing an Italian pope. So, they elected Robert of Geneva who was commander of the papal troops. He became the anti-pope Clement VII, and thus began the Western Schism which divided Catholic Christendom until 1417.

Nobody knew who was on first, authority wise. You had two popes, one in Avignon and one in Rome. France, Spain, Naples, and Scotland recognized the Avignon pope. Denmark, England, Flanders, Germany, Hungary, northern Italy, Ireland, Norway, Poland, and Sweden recognized the Roman pope. At one point there were three popes. Finally, the Council of Constance met in 1414, authorized by the legitimate successor of Urban VI, (remember him? The true pope in Rome?) The Council of Constance elected the new pope, whom (almost) everybody recognized. Finally, problem solved. Not on your

life!!! Now it gets really, really bad.

While no one was paying attention, a few things happened. The Church had become enmeshed in the politics of Europe, there were good and godly clergy and there were some not quite so good and godly, just like now, and then there was the black death. Over a period of 2-4 years, beginning in 1348 the Bubonic plague wiped out as much as half of the population of Europe. The death rate among clergy was much higher, perhaps two thirds. Parish priests and monks who were doing their jobs caught the plague and died.

In Avignon, Pope Clement VI's physicians told him to surround himself with torches to hide from the plague. But he remained at his post in Avignon supervising pastoral care of the sick and burials. He never caught disease. He wasn't a man noted for his holiness, but in this case he did his job. I would probably have hidden under my bed, whimpering and trying not to inhale.

So the good priests died, there was chaos in the leadership of the Church for about a century and the aristocracy tried to take over the Church. In this chaotic climate, there arose people who thought they knew what to do. The first of these was a priest named John Wycliffe in England, (1324-1384) who was in effect the father of the Protestant Reformation a full century before Luther.

Chapter 2

Continued. . .

November 20, 2010

There is no denying that in the 1400's there were problems in the Church in Europe. The concept of the nation-state was developing as well as the concept of the divine right of kings. These are important ideas.

In the middle ages, there were no "countries" as such, in Europe. There was CHRISTENDOM. The German barbarians (my ancestors) had swept into the Western Roman Empire around 400AD. At that time the Romans had been Christian for almost two centuries. Rome thought of itself as the Christian Empire. Admittedly, the emperors had moved their capital to the town of Byzantium, around 340AD. They called it New Rome, but everybody called it Constantinople, "Constantine's town." Sadly, today you can't go back to Constantinople because now it's Istanbul. So the Emperors moved east, but the bishop of Rome, acknowledged by ALL Christians as the head Bishop of the Universal Church, stayed in Rome and maintained his political independence from the Roman state. Thus in the years from 400 to1400 there were two forces to be reckoned with : Pope and Emperor. The popes gradually took over the civil administration of central Italy and bishops everywhere took on more and more functions of the state, such as the maintenance of public safety and the care of the poor.

Then came my people, the barbarians. The barbarians didn't want to destroy the Roman empire. They wanted to join it. What wasn't to like? The Romans had indoor plumbing. They bathed. They weren't covered with

fleas and they drank wine! And who doesn't like Italian food? The invading barbarians just wanted peace: a piece of the Roman Empire. And to get it they were happy to swear allegiance to the Emperor in Constantinople, and just go on pretending that they were a new kind of Roman, though they still mostly drank beer.

There were problems however. The barbarians governed themselves differently. They had a system by which soldiers swore allegiance to a military leader or tribal chief and that leader in turn swore allegiance to a king. Romans had a long history of written laws with a combination of elected and appointed rulers. This presented no real problem. The barbarian kings just swore allegiance to the emperor in Constantinople and then did as they pleased.

Another, perhaps larger problem was that the Romans were Catholics who believed that Jesus was God and man and that God was a unity of love called the Trinity. The barbarians were Arians, who believed that Jesus was not really divine. God was a lone ranger who sort of adopted Jesus. The Roman Bishops defended their Catholic congregations from these new overlords, and eventually the barbarian overlords became Catholic and settled in for the next 1,000 years to rule their Roman and Catholic subjects.

Thus was born the Middle ages, a collection of dukedoms and squires and knights and feudal oaths all loosely held together by kings and all swearing allegiance to an emperor, first the one in Byzantium and then one in Aachen Germany called Charlemagne. His descendants quibbled ever after as to who would be elected the Holy Roman Emperor. (WAKE UP!!! THIS PART'S IMPORTANT. I MEAN THE BIT ABOUT ELECTING THE EMPEROR.)

It was hard to tell where the Church left off and the State began, because it was all a big banquet called CHRISTENDOM. The task was to fight off the Mongols and the Muslims who wanted to destroy Christendom. The Muslims eventually did destroy the Christian heartland around North Africa, Spain, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and the Holy Land. By 1400, the Eastern Roman Empire held on by a thread in Greece and Western Turkey and only Western Europe was Christian and of the ancient Christian lands of the Mediterranean only Northern Italy, Greece and France remained Christian. Christianity looked like it was finished. Only the northern barbarians were Christian, and the Russians and the other Slavic countries, but Russia and Eastern Europe had been overrun by the Golden Horde, who were Muslims.

In Europe, things went from bad to worse. The papacy, as I've mentioned was a wreck which no one took seriously, the clergy had been decimated by the plague, as had society in general and there weren't enough peasants to work the land. The cost of labor skyrocketed, and the old feudal system that had kept Europe fairly stable for a almost a thousand years collapsed. Wycliffe and Hus went around condemning clerical corruption, and unfortunately they had a point. Wycliffe's followers were called the Lollards and they did a whole lot more than just point out the corruption of the post-black death clergy. They and Wycliffe denied the papacy, monasticism and the sacrificial nature of the Mass. They taught predestination and an early form of "Bible Only" (Sola Scriptura.) In short, they were Lutherans a hundred years before Luther. Their idea ideas spread in particular in Bohemia, which was at that time part of central Germany.

"How does one get from England to Bohemia? " I am sure you are asking. Simple: Anne of Bohemia who came to England at the end of January 1381 to become the wife of Richard II (1367–1400). Anne was instrumental in spreading Wycliffe's teachings because the Bohemians who came with her to England introduced his writings to Jan Hus who spread them in Bohemia and the adjacent areas of Germany. Just to demonstrate the mess, it is interesting to note that Anne's brother, King Wenceslaus got involved in the squabble between the Roman pope and the Avignon anti-pope. All this is bad enough, but there was one more thing that put the frosting on the cake.

Wycliffe wanted the state to take over Church properties in England. Well, that sounds reasonable. Remember the clergy were corrupt! (Some certainly were, many more weren't. It was the monks with their land holdings and incomes who maintained the schools, the hospitals, the soup kitchens, the shelters for the poor, the orphanages, and rented land to poor peasants at a minimal fee saving them from aristocratic vultures who treated them as slaves.) Wycliffe attacked the clergy and taught that the king is above the pope, in temporal matters and that the collection of annates (a type of fee paid to the pope) and indulgences were simony. He also taught that good government required that the Church be without political influence. (Sounds like the ACLU, no?) Wycliffe would have been in big trouble, had he not found a protector in John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster, 1340–1399 who was acting as ruler at this time. Duke John ran England and really liked some of Wycliffe's ideas. The king should run things, not the bishops. After all, kings and dukes and generalissimos and Chicago aldermen and mayors

really have the people's best interest at heart.

Remember that the old feudal system had collapsed, and kings and nations were emerging. Instead of Christendom, the emperors and the popes, you now had France and England and Aragon and Castile. The little duchies and squires that made up Europe were about to become nations with divinely appointed kings who wanted no pope or bishop to tell them what to do. Without a pope to excommunicate them or depose them, they would go to war with each other for the next 500 years, until Europe exhausted herself and her Christian culture in that holocaust of the 1st and 2nd world wars in which at least One Hundred Million people died, all told, and in which it seems that Europe herself has died. The final ingredients in this witch's brew: Johannes Gutenberg's printing press (about 1450) and that irrepressible German monk, Father Martin Luther (1483–1546).

Chapter 3

The Birth Of Junk Mail & Religious Advertising!

November 30, 2010

Well, by 1500 things in Christendom were in quite a pickle. Constantinople, the capital of the Roman Empire, and the greatest of Christian cities fell to the Muslim Turks in 1453, and the Turks seemed destined to swallow up the rest of Europe, and Christendom with it. The Popes had returned to Rome and the Western Schism had ended by 1417, but Rome was a mess. Old St. Peter's Basilica, built by the first Christian emperor, Constantine in 330 AD, was about to collapse. It was after all, over a thousand years old and while everyone was arguing about who was the real pope, no one had worried about the tuck pointing or cleaned the gutters.

Pope Nicholas V (1447–55) wanted to clean up Rome and was the first to consider tearing down the venerable old church and putting up a new one. He never quite got around to it, but one of his successors, Pope Julius II, decided to go ahead with the demolition and replace it with something more suitable. After all, he planned on being buried there. So around 1505, the old church was torn down.

(There is a story here that I can't resist telling. Julius planned his tomb right in the middle of the new St. Peter's, smack dab on top of the apostle's grave. It was to be a sort of stepped pyramid, covered with Michelangelo statues. The whole thing took longer than Julius imagined; 120 years to be

exact. They didn't quite finish on time and Julius didn't get the glorious tomb he had planned in the new basilica. They put Julius elsewhere for the time being and the few statues finished by Michelangelo at the time of Julius' demise were scattered around Rome Finally, the remains of Pope Julius were interred in St. Peter's many years later. If you visit St. Peter's today, walk toward the great altar and over on the right side you will see a large wooden console that I believe holds organ pipes. Around behind it they stack folding chairs for special events. Under the folding chairs you will find the grave of Julius II. The wonder of it all.)

Eventually, serious work was begun on the rebuilding of the heap of ruins that St. Peter's had become. Giovanni d' Medici, was born in 1475. He was raised as a Medici prince, fun-loving, cultured, a patron of the arts and without the sense that God gave geese. He was elected pope in 1513 (died 1521), an eight-year disaster. He was the last non-priest to be elected Pope. He was quickly ordained and crowned as Leo X. He is reported to have said to his brother Giuliano d' Medici, "Since God has seen fit to give us the papacy, let us enjoy it." And boy, did he. He paraded through Rome at the head of a lavish parade featuring panthers, jesters, and Hanno, his pet white elephant. Leo could go through money like a drunken sailor in a disreputable port. It is not cheap being a Renaissance pope, what with Italian wars, feeding white elephants, hiring relatives and all, and then there were all the rebuilding projects, and don't forget St. Peter's.

One method for raising funds was the granting of indulgences in return for contributions. Remember, bingo had not yet been invented. Enter Albrecht, Archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg. Albrecht wanted to be the Archbishop of Mainz, because the Archbishop of Mainz was one of seven people who voted for the Holy Roman Emperor. He was, however, only about 27 or 28 years old, too young to be an archbishop. But Pope Leo was happy to overlook this difficulty for a slight monetary consideration (Remember Hanno, the hungry elephant.) Albrecht had borrowed 21,000 ducats (I have no idea how much a ducat is worth. Though I imagine quite a bit.) from Jacob Fugger, and then got permission from Leo to conduct a sale of indulgences in order to repay the loan, provided half the proceeds went to Leo. Albrecht hired the Dominican priest, Fr. John Tetzel, to preach the indulgence and thus light the fuse that started the reformation.

Fr. Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a German priest and professor of theol-

ogy at Wittenberg University in the diocese of Mainz. He, like many of us Germans, could always be counted on to have an opinion. When he saw the ad for Tetzel's revival and fire sale of indulgences he challenged all comers to a debate with his famous 95 Theses, which he both sent to Albert and nailed to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg. Among a number of ideas, mostly gathered from our friends Huss and Wycliffe, was the idea that indulgences were a bunch of hooey, starving elephants notwithstanding.

Albrecht forwarded Luther's letter to Rome, and the fertilizer hit the ventilator, theologically speaking. One at first sides with Luther, and perhaps he did have a point. The case can be made that the whole Church was being run by a bunch of crooks. Fr. Luther might have done great good for the church, had he insisted on the renewal of the Church and the papacy. He started out that way, but he soon came to believe that the pope was not infallible, but that he, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther was, and Dr. Luther had some very strange ideas indeed. In normal times, Fr. Luther would have been in hot water, or at least the guest of honor at a medieval barbecue, but these were not normal times.

The papacy was in the hands of a bunch of self-indulgent idiots and the German princes (just as self-indulgent) were intrigued by the idea that they might not have to send all that money to Italy in order to marry their cousins or buy a get out of hell free card. And remember Gutenberg and his printing press? Martin was the first person in history with the means to tell all of his friends just what kind of loons were in charge and just what he thought of them.

Let us review:

1. After a century of exile and schism, the Church, the papacy and the Holy City of Rome were in a shambles.

2. The aristocratic families of Italy thought the papacy existed for their enrichment and amusement.

3. The Muslims were in the process of swallowing up the Christian world, and

4. the German nobility met a German monk with a bad temper and some strange ideas about Christianity, who, they thought could help them say "Take ye a hike, thou varlets!" to those thieves in Italy.

Chapter 4

Fr. Martin Luther, Someone You Should Know

December 4, 2010

I hope by now I've convinced you that things were a mess in Christendom by around 1500. People knew that reform and renewal were necessary if Europe and Christianity were going to continue, but what form would the renewal of the Church take?

Would it be inspired by people like Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) a Spanish knight from a Basque noble family, hermit, priest, and founder of the Jesuits and Saint Peter of Alcntara (1499 -1562) a Spanish Franciscan and the woman he inspired, Saint Teresa of vila, (1515- 1582) Carmelite nun and reformer of convents, and her friend Saint John of the Cross (1542-1591), Spanish mystic and Carmelite friar and priest? They taught that only a renewal of the soul, particularly among the clergy and religious could untie the knot. Not everyone thought this way. As the 1500's dawned, the world stood at the brink of a whole new world, Columbus had returned to Spain after finding a whole new world. The Spanish speaking world exploded with growth in a way that had never happened before, and with the Spanish language and culture, the reforms of St. Teresa and St. Ignatius and the others traveled around the world.

But in the cold north, there was another kind of reform brewing. The great minds of France and England and the German speaking lands thought that

perhaps a council should be called to govern the Church. Where the ideas of Huss and Wycliff had taken root, a council seemed the only possible solution. Enough of popes. Let a council elected by the rulers of Europe run things. Change was inevitable. But there was a fuse that lit the fire that soon burned out of control in all the lands north of the Alps and Pyrenees. That fuse was Father Martin Luther, an unhappy Catholic priest.

Martin Luther was born November 10, 1483 (he died February 18, 1546). He was the son of a man who was on his way up from being a miner. Hans Luther had started his own mining company in order to better the position of the family. He wanted the best for son Martin, and the best was law school as far as Hans was concerned. In 1501, at the age of nineteen, Martin entered the University of Erfurt to study law. Eventually he left law school and entered religious life. On July 2, 1505, he was returning to school after a visit home. There was a terrible thunderstorm and a lightning bolt struck near him. Terrified, he cried out "Help! Saint Anna, I will become a monk!"

Being a German and a law student he believed he had made a vow and would not break it. He left law school, sold his books, and entered an Augustinian friary (something like a monastery) in Erfurt on July 17,1505. Luther was depressed by his own decision. He said to his friends at a farewell party, "This day you see me, and then, not ever again." Luther was depressed, but his father was furious over the waste of an expensive education. To make the long story short, Luther tried his best, but never liked the religious life. Luther said this period of his life was one of spiritual despair. He said, "I lost touch with Christ the Savior and Comforter, and made of Him the jailor and hangman of my poor soul." Eventually he became a teacher. In 1512, he joined the faculty of the University of Wittenberg and spent the rest of his life as a theology professor there.

I've already told you about Tetzel and the 95 Theses. Remember I told you about the German princes who were sick and tired of having popes tell them not to oppress their peasants, and the crowd that was in Rome at the time seemed for the most part like money crazed frat boys. The German emperor summoned Fr. Luther to explain himself at the annual parliament, called the Diet, held that year in the town of Worms (pronounced "voorms"). How many school children have learned not that Luther was summoned to the parliament at the German town of "Voorms, but rather that Luther forced by the pope to eat a diet of worms? But as I always say the German language

of my ancestors is in fact the language of romance.

Where was I? Oh yes the Diet of Worms. Luther was not merely opposed to the abuse of power on the part of some churchmen. He questioned the whole theological structure of the faith. During his years of teaching theology and hating his own religious life, he had drunk deeply of the ideas then current in central Germany. The pope's authority was inferior to that of a council, one is saved by faith alone, good works are unimportant, man is not free. God's grace is so sovereign that man had no free will, we are predestined to heaven or hell and there is nothing we can do about it. He once wrote: "Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong, but let your faith in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. We will commit sins while we are here, for this life is not a place where righteousness can exist.No sin can separate us from Him, even if we were to kill or commit adultery a thousand times each day" He believed that if we were among the chosen, our sinning could not keep us from heaven. Faith alone, grace alone Bible alone!

At the Diet of Worms Luther was presented with copies of his writings laid out on a table and asked if he had written them and stood by them. Luther said they were his, but asked for a night to think over the second part of the question. The next day he said "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything."

It is said that the Emperor at one point asked him if after 1500 years of Christian faith, he, Martin Luther, was the first one to get it right. Luther essentially said yes. He did not trust popes nor councils, but he asked Europe to trust him and his interpretations. He left the Diet unharmed, having been given a safe conduct, but on his way home, he was kidnapped by one of the German princes who hid Luther in his castle, the Wartburg, (another unfortunate name). Luther grew a beard, donned civilian clothes and spent his time in protective custody in the castle writing anti Catholic tracts translating the Bible in a way that agreed with him and hunting wild boars. Meanwhile, outside the castle the dying started. Untold hundreds of thousands and even millions died over the next century and in fact, that is when

Europe began to die.

Chapter 5

Dr. Martin Luther, And His Lovely Wife, Sister Katherine

December 10, 2010

After the Parliament at Worms, Luther spent the next ten months hiding out. Duke Frederick III, Elector of Saxony "kidnapped" him on his way back home to Wittenberg and took him to the Wartburg Castle at Eisenach in a kind of protective custody, thus saving him from the emperor who was loyal to the traditional Church. There he had nothing to do but translate the scriptures, hunt wild boar and write vitriolic pamphlets against the papacy and the faith.

Many people are under the assumption that Luther first translated the Bible into a common tongue. Not so! There were fourteen perfectly good translations of the Bible in the German language. Luther produced a New Testament while he was in hiding. It was not the first of its kind, but was significant for its de-emphasis of certain books, notably the epistle of James which Luther called "an epistle of straw," in which he found "little that pointed to Christ and His saving work." Neither was he very fond of the book of Revelation, in which he could "in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it." Luther took a dim view of Esther, Hebrews, and Jude as well, and denied the canonical nature of seven Old Testament books that were held as Scripture by all Christians from the most ancient times. These are the books of Tobit, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, and Baruch, and some of Esther and Daniel. The whole hatchet job on God's

written Word began in 1522 and was finished in 1534.

As important as what he took out of the Bible was what he put in. Luther added the word "alone" to Romans 3:28 so that it reads, "man is justified without the works of the law but through faith ALONE." The word "alone" does not appear in the original Greek text. In fact, the only place where the phrase "faith alone" appears in the New Testament is in James 2:24 "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone." Remember? Luther wanted to dump the Letter of St. James. It didn't agree with his theology.

In Germany, the main meal is still at noon. (Ah, I think fondly of the old country and Aunt Lisa's pot roast. . . ..) Anyway, Luther would dig into the sauerkraut and spaetzle, wash it down with a beer and get to talking. (Allow me to quote Luther regarding beer "Whoever drinks beer, he is quick to sleep; whoever sleeps long, does not sin; whoever does not sin, enters Heaven! Thus, let us drink beer!" And again "The Word is the principal part of baptism. If in an emergency there's no water at hand, it doesn't matter whether water or beer is used." I include these two quotes just to irritate Baptists.) Thus refreshed, Dr. Luther would begin to hold forth while his students furiously took notes, and Luther would say the darndest things. For instance during his lunchtime pontifications, Luther, claimed that his idea that people need to commit real and honest sins had originated in a conversation with the Devil!

At one of these lunches Luther was apparently questioned by one of his students regarding his addition of the word "ALONE" to Romans 3:28. The student said that all of Christendom wondered why Luther had added the word "alone" to the text. Luther responded, " Tell them that. . . ..Luther will have it so, and he is a doctor above all the doctors in Popedom." (Amic. Discussion, 1, 127,'The Facts About Luther,' O'Hare, TAN Books, 1987, p. 201. and John Lawson Stoddard. Rebuilding a Lost Faith. 1922, pp 101-102. I am having a little trouble with this footnote. I cannot find out what Amic. Discussion is. If anyone knows, I would be grateful for the information. I like to have primary sources whenever possible.) Apparently Luther denied papal infallibility, but not his own.

Luther also denied the right of the pope to give dispensations, but Luther himself seemed to have given a real whopper of a dispensation. One of Luther's great protectors was the Duke of Hesse, Phillip II. But Phillip had

a problem. In 1526 he had married Christine of Saxony, who was reputedly ugly, sick, and drunk most of the time. He fell in love with a 17-year-old, named Margarethe von der Saale. He couldn't divorce Christine, but didn't want to make Margarethe his mistress. After all, that would be adultery. In the end, he got permission from Martin Luther, who decided that bigamy was less sinful than divorce.

The bigamous wedding took place in 1540 witnessed by Martin Bucer and Philip Melanchthon, two of Luther's followers. Luther, claiming that he had given this advice in the confessional, refused to admit his role in the marriage! I mention this sordid affair not merely to snipe at heretics, though that is certainly fun. I do it because Father Luther's modern day disciples in the Catholic Church often do the same thing. I have heard of priests in the confessional passing out "annulments" and giving permission to use artificial birth control or not to worry about some sin or the other. Like Luther, they have a power to dispense from the very law of God that the Catholic Church has never claimed even for the pope in Rome. "Father knows better than the Pope!" It was Luther's motto, and it's the motto of quite a few of his present day descendants.

Back to the Wartburg! Luther was very upset that people back at Wittenberg were going too fast and that they had not asked his permission for the things they were initiating, such as destroying religious images, and changing the liturgy. It was HIS reform and they should not proceed without HIS direction. But it was too late. The genie was out of the bottle and every man was his own pope, just like Luther. It was while Luther was at the Wartburg that he came up with the idea that is most important for our discussion of the roots of the Hootenanny Mass. It was in the Wartburg he decided that the Mass was not a sacrifice but that it existed for the consolation and the instruction of the faithful. Thus did much of the Christian world stop worshiping God. The liturgy was no longer the fitting sacrifice of the Blood shed on Calvary, but had become the exercise in narcissism that passes for worship in most mega-churches and now infects Catholicism wherever she is not persecuted.

Luther left the Wartburg with his program in order and Europe in chaos. Bible alone, faith alone and Luther alone would make everything better. He returned to the university, dumped his religious attire and married a former nun, Katherine von Bora in 1525. They went on to have six children. He blathered while Europe bled. He held forth at lunch, in the lecture hall, and

the pulpit, wrote diatribes and attended the occasional meeting, and became increasingly irrelevant to the revolution he had started. His last sermon was delivered at Eisleben on February 15, 1546, three days before his death. It was about the "... obdurate Jews, whom it was a matter of great urgency to expel from all German territory." It ended by urging the congregation "to drive the Jews bag and baggage from their midst, unless they desisted from their calumny and their usury and became Christians."

"We want to practice Christian love toward them and pray that they convert... but also that they are our public enemies ... and if they could kill us all, they would gladly do so. And so often they do." He died on February 18, 1546. It would be almost 400 years before an unemployed Austrian painter fulfilled Luther's dying admonition.

Just a final thought. I once visited the Wartburg with Jacob von der Suppe Kueche, a dear friend and convert to Catholicism. He was shaking his head as he returned from freshening up. In the washroom of this reformation shrine, there was a machine for dispensing (family column; euphemism to follow) intimate male protection/birth control devices. He said "I've been all over Europe and have never seen such a machine in a Catholic shrine." All his arguments with his Protestant relatives were over. He had seen the inevitable absurdity of Fr. Luther's reformation. "Blessed the womb that never bore, the breast that never nursed." (Luke 11:27)

Chapter 6

"Jean Cauvin Et Son Ami Flambee" (That's French for John Calvin and his toasted friend.)

December 18, 2010

Luther lost control of "his" reformation and pretty much everybody in Europe lost control of everything. The peasants of Germany decided to celebrate their new found Christian freedom by slaughtering the landowners to whom they had owed a feudal obligation. They figured if the priests no longer needed popes and bishops who needed landlords? So in 1525, the peasants rose up to throw off their shackles and establish the kingdom of God on Earth. This was not what Fr. Luther had in mind, so he wrote a tract to the German nobility asking for their help. It has the charming title "Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants" which urged the nobility to treat the rebels like mad dogs. Allow me to quote : "Therefore let everyone who can, smite, slay, and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel... For baptism does not make men free in body and property, but in soul;" Thus Luther.

The German nobility were only to happy to help out. They slaughtered about 100,000 peasants and thus began a century of war in Europe that, when it ended in 1652, had taken between 8 and 10 million lives. This figure counts the English Civil Wars (Why do they call wars "civil"?) in which the followers of Calvin tried to stamp out the last vestiges of Catholicism in the

British Isles. That meant 200,000 dead in Scotland and England, and 618,000 in Ireland or about 40% of that island's population, The total population of Europe in 1600 was 78 million, so "reformation" was accomplished by the death of one out ten people. The death toll in Germany was more like 1 out of every 3. They certainly took Luther seriously when he told them "smite, slay and stab." (Oddly enough Spain was the safest place to be at the time. The Spanish Inquisition hadn't let the lunacy get a foothold and not one person died in religious wars in Spain.)

Between his failure to control the reformation and his cooperation with Phillip of Hesse's odd marital situation, Luther lost the initiative. Father Ulrcih Zwingli (1484-1531) was the pastor of the parish church in Einsiedeln, Switzerland. He thought Luther hadn't gone far enough. There should be no mass, no saints, no bishops no vestments, not no how. Eventually he died with sword in hand at the battle of Kappel in 1531, aged only 47. The mantle of reform was taken up by a recent immigrant to Switzerland, a Frenchman named Jean Cauvin, or as we call him John Calvin (1509-1564). Like Luther, Calvin was trained as a lawyer. He broke from the Catholic Church around 1530. (To put things in perspective In 1530 Luther was 47 years old, Calvin a lad of 21, and the reformation had been rolling along for ten years and the death toll was only up to 100,000. After a violent reaction against Protestants in France, Calvin fled to Basel, Switzerland. There he was recruited by William Farel to help reform the Church in Geneva. Calvin created new forms of Church government and liturgy, and wrote his masterwork, the Institutes of the Christian Religion. He taught five central points that can be remembered by the acronym T-U-L-I-P:

Total depravity (Good name for a punk rock band) Unlimited election (Sounds like Chicago politics) Limited atonement (Sounds like the fine print in a car warranty) Irresistible Grace (Sounds like something from a beauty pageant) Perseverance of the Saints (Sounds like a New Orleans football game)

Perhaps I should define a little more precisely. Total depravity: there is nothing left of the divine image in humanity. Unconditional election: God created us to go to heaven in order to show His mercy and created you to go to hell to show his justice. (Us and You in the equation depends on whose Church we're talking about.) In other words some people were designed for eternal suffering. The whole concept makes Hitler look like a Campfire Girl. Limited atonement: Jesus only died for the saved. Irresistible grace: You

have no free will. God's grace is so great that if he chooses to save you, you are powerless to resist. Perseverance of the saints: Once saved, always saved. (Wouldn't that be nice?)

In addition to his T-U-L-I-P, Calvin taught that each congregation was a Church in itself and needed no pope or bishop and that each individual inspired by the Holy Spirit was sufficient to interpret the Scriptures. In other words, each church its own denomination and everyone his own pope. And so 500 years after the reformation we have 30 or 40 thousand different kinds of Christianity. Thank you, Monsieur Calvin.

Don't think for a moment that Calvin, believed that everyone was entitled to his opinion. You were only entitled to Calvin's opinion. If you disagreed with Calvin you were exiled from Geneva or worse. Once a man said publicly that he didn't care what Calvin taught, he was sure that he himself had free will, he was quickly tried and sentenced to exile. He promised he would believe what Calvin taught, but please don't send him away from wife, children and home. Calvin magnanimously allowed him to stay if he did public penance by walking through the streets of Geneva in his undershirt carrying a lighted candle, begging Calvin's forgiveness.

Fun was pretty much outlawed in the New and Reformed Geneva, drinking frowned on, singing and dancing and the like. Calvin banned plays and tried to introduce religious pamphlets and psalm singing into Geneva's taverns. At one point Calvin closed the taverns and replaced them with "evangelical refreshment places" where moderate drinking was allowed, but only when accompanied with Bible reading. There were laws against certain clothes and work or pleasure on Sunday. Those found guilty of wild dancing were severely punished. Those condemned for "bawdy singing" had their tongues pierced. (I wonder what Calvin would have made of the tongue piercing craze of our times. Would he have become a body piercing enthusiast? He seems to have liked piercing but disapproved of jewelry.)

Calvin rediscovered the Old Testament which clearly calls for strict punishments. Jesus' dialogue with the woman caught in adultery, "Has no one condemned you? Neither, then, do I" does not seem to cross Calvin's mind or heart. Idolatry, as Calvin defined it, rosaries, religious images and the like, was punished with death, as was blasphemy. As in the Law of Moses, to curse or strike a parent, should be punished with death and so Calvin once had a child executed for striking his parent. The penalty for adultery is, of

course, death. Calvin had his own stepdaughter, among others, burned at the stake for adultery as well as her husband, his son-in-law, in a separate incident.

But the icing on the Calvinist cake is the death of Michael Servetus. Servetus was a Unitarian. He did not believe in the Trinity and so fled the Inquisition in his native Spain. Calvin was an old acquaintance, and Servetus assumed he would be safe in Geneva's anti-Papist republic. Calvin and Servetus had written about thirty letters to each other, debating doctrine until Calvin got angry and stopped corresponding. The greatest offense was that Servetus had sent Calvin a copy of Calvin's own Institutes of the Christian Religion with corrections in the margins pointing out Calvin's errors. Servetus decided to visit Geneva with Calvin's permission in 1547. Calvin, however wrote a letter to Farel, his aforementioned collaborator, saying that if Servetus came to Geneva there would be trouble, "for if he came, as far as my authority goes, I would not let him leave alive." On his way to Italy, Servetus was dumb enough to pass through Geneva where he attended one of Calvin's sermons. Calvin had him arrested. After a long trial designed by Calvin's opponents to irritate him, the town council, at Calvin's bidding, condemned Servetus to death as a heretic. Calvin had a moment of pity and asked that Servetus be beheaded instead of burnt. No Luck. Servetus was burnt on a pyre of his own books.

Calvin was the consummate work-aholic. He wrote night and day corresponding with his followers from Poland in the east to England in the west. One of his most important correspondents was the Duke of Somerset, the regent of England for the boy king, Edward Tudor, son of Henry VIII. In 1546 in a letter to Somerset, he expounded on his theory about the right of punishment taught in the Law of Moses, which threatened stiff-necked people with death, just what of England wanted to hear.

Somerset raised his nephew, King Edward, as a strict Calvinist and thus set the stage for the English civil wars. When Edward died at age 15, his very Catholic sister, Mary, decided to bring England back to the Catholic church. Like rats from a sinking ship, Protestant leaders fled England. Calvin was more than happy to shelter English exiles in Geneva starting in 1555 Eventually, they formed their own reformed churches under the tutelage of John Knox and William Whittingham and so carried Calvin's ideas back to England and Scotland, and thence to the whole English speaking world.

Before we can move on to the Pilgrims and their progress, we need to take a side trip to figure out just how Calvin took the Merry out of Merry Olde England.

Chapter 7

Henry VIII, A Monarch Who Knew How To Turn Heads

December 25, 2010

Henry VIII (1491-1547), King of England from 1509. Remember Luther? He tacked up his 95 Theses and started the whole ball rolling around 1517. Henry was staunchly Catholic, but un-staunched as the Reformation unfolded. (Staunch: firm and steadfast; true. One often hears of staunch Republicans, though I have never heard of a staunch Democrat but there must be some. Where was I? Oh yes... the Reformation) He was so staunch that he wrote a book in 1521 called "The Defense of the Seven Sacraments" for which Pope Leo X (not very staunch) rewarded Henry the title "Defender of the Faith."

Henry's life was charmed. He was young, handsome, both scholarly and athletic. His father Henry VII, had been so tight that he squeaked and thus left Henry with a full treasury. He had a lovely Spanish wife, the aunt of Emperor Charles V, the most powerful man on earth, (very, very staunch). She adored him. He was the very model of the Renaissance prince and was loved by all, except for the people whose heads he lopped off, beginning early in his reign with his miserly father's finance ministers. Having taken care of the treasury department, he promptly started to spend all that money on his two favorite hobbies: building palaces and invading France.

Did I mention he was loved by all? Especially the Boleyn girls. There

was a rumor that young prince Henry had been a very close friend of Lady Elizabeth Boleyn. Just scurrilous court gossip probably, but he was definitely a special friend of her daughter, Mary Boleyn by whom he may have had one or perhaps two children, and her little sister, Ann. All three of the Boleyn girls, mother and both daughters were ladies in waiting at the Tudor court. One wonders just what they were waiting for. Well, with Ann it became pretty clear. She was waiting for a wedding ring and the crown of England. Meanwhile, Henry's Spanish wife had managed to produce one measly daughter and Henry wanted a son and heir a Henry IX, if you will.

He decided that he had sinned by marrying Queen Catherine who had been his brother's wife. His brother had died and the king, Henry VII, (the miser), had not wanted to return Catherine's dowry to her Spanish relatives, so he asked the pope for permission to marry his second son off to the first son's widow. No problem. It seems that Prince Arthur and Princess Catherine had never managed to complete the nuptials (remember this is a family column), so what was the issue? A dead prince who had never really been a husband?

Well, much later, Henry decided that he was living in sin with a Spanish princess who had been his brother's true wife. His conscience was sore grieved. It wasn't sore grieved by the fact that he was catting about with any lady in waiting who didn't have the good sense to wait somewhere else, including a couple of sisters who were young enough to have been his daughters, one of whom may well have been, (though modern scholars dispute this. I still can't help mentioning it. It makes for fun reading.) Ann had more sense than most of them. She refused the king which drove him wild with etc., etc. So he decide to dump his Spanish wife, who had let herself go a little bit anyway, and petitioned the pope for an annulment.

The pope had problems with the annulment. Queen Catherine's nephew, (remember him? the most powerful man in the world who had an army that had just sacked Rome). There was the little matter that the woman Henry wanted to marry was the sister of Henry's former girlfriend and he was probably the father of two children to whom he would soon be uncle by marriage and heaven knows what else, and had a legitimate daughter, Mary, by his first wife, who was supposed to inherit the crown. All this would make birthdays and Christmas a little confusing, to say the least. What to do, being a staunch Catholic and all? Ann was a clever girl and gave the king a book called "The Obedience of the Christian Man" which essentially

said that there are kings in the Bible, but no popes, and that the king should run the Church in his own country. Wycliff had said as much a long time ago. So to get on with the story.

Henry declared himself head of the Church in England, gave himself an annulment, married Ann, crowned her queen and then chopped her head off. Really. She was only queen for three years, but oh, what eventful years they were! She convinced Henry to appoint one of her family friends, Thomas Cranmer, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, who in turn sponsored Thomas Cromwell for the job of Chancellor. They were both convinced Protestants and helped Ann bring the Calvinist version of the Reformation to England. Cranmer was useful theologically and Cromwell politically. All those palaces and invasions of France were expensive, so Cromwell got the idea that if they closed down the monasteries, and confiscated their lands and the incomes, all would be well. Slight problem: the monasteries maintained the schools, orphanages, hospitals, soup kitchens, homes for poor and aged and rented the land at low rates to the rural poor.

Suddenly all the monks and nuns and the people they had served were homeless and wandered the countryside begging. Toward the end of Henry's life, Cromwell tried to solve the problem by declaring vagrancy a crime punishable by enslavement and worse. That must have helped. The estimates vary, but usually hover around 70,000 dead in Henry's reform of the Church in England.

As I mentioned, Ann got her crown but didn't long have a head on which to wear it. She was accused of incest, adultery and a host of other things, having also produced one measly girl, Elizabeth. More about her later. Henry managed to carry on somehow. He managed to carry on with another lady in waiting. One day after Anne's execution, Henry got engaged to Jane Seymour, with whom he had recently been keeping company. They were married 10 days later.

She died in 1537 from complications of childbirth, but she had produced a male heir, Edward (more later). Henry went on to wed Anne of Cleves, a German Protestant princess whose Teutonic charms did not appeal to Henry. He annulled the marriage and moved on to Catherine Howard, you guessed it, another lady in waiting whom he eventually beheaded, and finally Catherine Parr, who managed to out-live the old goat. And so Henry died in 1547, he started out a young, athletic Catholic with a happy marriage. He died obese,

crippled, and heretical, the husband of six wives and numerous mistresses. England was in turmoil and tens of thousands dead and many more homeless, but Henry did manage to produce three children and the Church of England.

Chapter 8

A Disclaimer and a Slight Digression: Henry VIII, Inventor of the Really Short Hair Cut

January 1, 2011

At this point I have to make a slight disclaimer. I have been rather hard on the founders of Protestantism, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Cranmer, Henry VIII and that crowd. From the perspective of five centuries it is easy to be harsh. One must take a look however at two characters of the English reformation who make it much more difficult for me to be as smug as I would like to be.

The first of these is St. Thomas More (1478-1535), lawyer, philosopher, and finally Henry VIII's chancellor. Rumors abounded that More tortured heretics in his own home, but that myth can be blamed on John Foxe and his Book of Martyrs. More denied the claims. He admitted that he did imprison heretics in his own home, but that was not unusual. It was done for their "sure keeping," but he claimed never to have tortured anyone "so help me God," and More was not a man to take oaths lightly. It cannot be denied that six heretics were burned at the stake during More's chancellorship. It was pretty standard procedure, and as I have elsewhere pointed out, we Americans still burn people at the stake, we just call it electrocution. More refused to sign the oath recognizing Henry as head of the Church in England. He was eventually tried and executed, holding on to the belief that the papacy was established by Christ and thus necessary.

The second is St. John Fisher (1459-1535) an English bishop. Fisher was also executed by King Henry VIII for refusing to accept Henry as head of the Church and continuing to hold papal primacy. Of the bishops in England, 26 in all, only St. John refused to give in, and as far as I know, of all the high government officials of England only St. Thomas refused to give in. My point is this: these men gave their lives, not simply for Christ and the Church Universal, and not just for the papacy. They gave their lives in defense of the papacy, when the popes were, by in large, not very worthy men. They were able to see past the circumstances of the times and to realize that the papacy was integral to the Gospel. Most of the people of England, and I suppose Germany, thought, "What's the difference? They're all a bunch of crooks!" This was a time when stealing and killing for Christ was much in vogue. The Pizarro brothers were evangelizing Peru at the time by burning, raping, garroting, wholesale theft and enslavement, all the while giving God the glory.

The other conquistadors did their best, but they really didn't give it the effort that the Pizarros did. It was everywhere the same. My forbears come from a little town in the rolling hills of Upper-Hessia (go to Marburg, take a right, you can't miss it.) The town's history didn't lend itself to a quiet reverence for traditional Catholicism. Everybody remembered how back in 1465 two bishops had gotten into a shooting war over who was going to be Archbishop of Mainz. We backed the wrong guy. The bishop who eventually won the argument put our town under siege and to commemorate the event, there are three cannonballs in the church wall to this day.

So, when somewhere around 1520, the pastor marched into the mayor's office and announced that the town was now protestant, the mayor just nodded. There would be no more Masses, people didn't like Mass anyway since it was boring and pointless. Quite a few people disagreed and wanted to stay Catholic, despite the pastor. They built a chapel outside the town walls. Eventually the town was re-Catholicized and is part of a cluster of small Northern German Catholic towns, a very rare thing. (Motto: crabby, but still Catholic.)

I suspect that, had I been there at the time, I would have said, "Luther has a point! Throw the bums out!" Because my ancestors come from the same cheerful part of Germany as Luther and the eponymous Brothers Grimm, I have a certain sympathy for Luther. There were things wrong IN the

Church, but there was nothing wrong WITH the Church. Luther would have been counted with Teresa of Avila, and John of the Cross if he had just reformed the abuses and not the theology. He tried to make the Church conform to what he thought reasonable and, I suspect to his own needs. He only succeeded in unleashing a century of war and the secularized society in which we now live. Someone once said that Henry VIII's attempt to partially protestantize the English Church was like commanding a man to leap from a tower and then commanding him to stop half way down. So it was with Martin Luther.

Luther, like myself, really believed that his ideas were so reasonable, that if only people would agree with him, all would be fine. He was not a year into the revolution he had created when he realized that it wouldn't go as planned. Luther once said, "I confess that I am much more negligent than I was under the pope, and there is now nowhere such an amount of earnestness under the Gospel, as was formerly seen among monks and priests." (Walch. IX. 1311) In 1538, Luther wrote, "Who would have begun to preach, if we had known beforehand that so much unhappiness, tumult, scandal, blasphemy, ingratitude, and wickedness would have been the result?" (Walch. VIII. 564 These quotes are taken from the Johann Georg Walch Edition of Luther's Works, 1740-1753.) Most sadly, there is a story told of Luther's mother who, as she lay dying, asked her son which really was better, Protestantism or Catholicism. Luther is said to have replied, "Mother it is easier to live as a protestant, but it is easier to die as a Catholic." I'm not sure of the footnote here, but it pretty much sums things up, and one can't help but feel for Luther in a way that one feels for no other of the reformers. He was a renaissance Pandora, who having opened the box, saw all that was good fly away. I cannot but feel sorry for him.

Chapter 9

The Tudor Kids, Chips Off The Old Chopping Block

January 8, 2011

Henry gave it one more college try in his attempt to conquer France by besieging Boulogne in 1544. After failing one more time at his second favorite hobby (the first was certainly not palace building) he went home to England and died in 1547. He was succeeded on the throne by little Edward, his nine-year-old son by Jane Seymour.

Edward Seymour was the long dead Queen Jane's brother and uncle to the boy King Edward (keep your Edwards straight. It's very important.) Uncle Edward seized power and named himself Duke of Somerset and ran England. Meanwhile, little King Edward VI, despite the fact that he was a child, was a committed Protestant and had his little mind set on obliterating popery (the religion, not the scented candle) from England. Remember Cranmer? Ann Boleyn's friend? He was a real survivor, at least up to this point. With Archbishop Cranmer's help little King Edward published the Book of Common Prayer with its Protestant order of service. The book was not appreciated by the remaining Catholics, especially those in Devon and Cornwall, where people spoke a form of Gaelic and English, a more foreign language to them than was Latin. Thus erupted the Prayer Book Rebellion in Cornwall which Uncle Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, now Lord Protector, put down by killing one in ten of the Cornish population.

The rebellion hardened little King Edward's determination to get rid of the remaining Catholics in the country including his older sister Mary, the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a staunch Catholic. She simply refused to stop going to Mass! He was on good terms with his sister Elizabeth, a Protestant, though not a very staunch one (there's that word again).

Lord Protector Somerset (Uncle Ed Seymour) then kidnapped little King Edward, taking him to Windsor Castle in order to maintain his hold over the growing boy, but Uncle Ed Seymour was overthrown by John Dudley, the Earl of Warwick, who then appointed himself Duke of Northumberland. Dudley wanted to make England completely Protestant and to get rich in the process. He stripped the churches of their Catholic art and so created the unadorned style associated with Anglican/Episcopalian churches today, which some modern Catholics are so fond of imitating. (If you want to see what an English church looked like before John Dudley got his mitts on them, visit St. Gregory's on the north side of Chicago, a gem of English art.) Little King Edward VI became ill in 1553, and his sister Mary the very, very Catholic, was next in line for the throne. At John Dudley's (Lord Northumberland) urging, little King Edward, now about 15, young but determined and desperate for a Protestant heir, changed his father's will to allow a cousin, Lady Jane Grey, to become queen. It seemed the only way to keep the English people from returning to the Catholicism to which many were still loyal. Besides, Jane just happened to be married to John Dudley's youngest son Guildford.

That would have started the Dudley Dynasty. Those English have a way with names. Just nine days after the boy king died, Mary Tudor's supporters escorted her to London and installed her as queen. Jane and her husband were later executed. All those politicians who had ardently supported Jane now ardently supported the Catholic Mary, especially when she told them they could keep the land, houses and money they had stolen from the monasteries. What? Politicians flip-flopping? Unheard of!

The reign of Queen Mary went swimmingly at first. She pardoned most of Jane's supporters. She didn't even execute Jane until Jane's father tried to depose Mary and put his own daughter back on the throne. Things only started to go downhill when Mary announced that she was going to marry the Spanish prince, Philip, her very, very Catholic cousin. She was as committed to making England Catholic as her brother had been to making England

Protestant. Being a Tudor, she knew only one way to do it, well, two ways. In addition to the family hobby of beheading, she shared her father's interest in burnings at the stake. Her Spanish husband, whom people sometimes blame for the executions, actually told her lighten up on the violence. It only made the Protestants look good. He actually insisted that she spare her sister Elizabeth who was really trying to look like a good Catholic. Mary succeeded in burning about 280 heretics, earning her the name of Bloody Mary. She had a series of false pregnancies, Prince Philip gave up and went back to Spain where the weather was better and he would be king of a large part of the world. Mary died on November 17, 1558. Oh, by the way, one of the people she burned at the stake was Archbishop Cranmer. I guess he wasn't much of a survivor after all.

Her sister Elizabeth, age 25, succeeded her as Elizabeth I of England, Gloriana, the virgin queen, guiding light of the Elizabethan age. Don't believe everything you read. Elizabeth was as crazy as a bedbug. She was, after all, a Tudor. Elizabeth was a Protestant, not very much of a Protestant, but a Protestant none the less. She was the daughter of Anne Boleyn who, with Cranmer, had brought Protestantism to England. The bishops of England had a little more starch at that time than under the reign of Henry VIII. They mostly refused to have anything to do with Elizabeth's coronation. She finally got the Bishop of Carlisle, Owen Oglethorpe, to perform the ceremony. (You gotta love those English names.) When Oglethorpe used some Catholic parts of the coronation ceremony, Elizabeth got up and left. Elizabeth quickly introduced the Act of Uniformity and the Act of Supremacy, making the Church of England Protestant and confirming what her father, Henry, had said all along. She was the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. From then on it was required to attend Church of England services every Sunday. All clergy and government officials were required to swear an oath recognizing the Church of England, its independence from the Catholic Church, and Elizabeth as Supreme Governor of the Church. If they refused the oath once, they would have a second chance. If again they refused to swear they were thrown out of office and their property was confiscated.

In 1569, the north of England, where Catholicism was still strong, rose up in rebellion against Elizabeth, as it had against her father, and thousands died. It is debatable that these were martyrdoms, but they certainly died because of resistance to the prohibition of Catholicism by Elizabeth. She executed 221 people outright for their Catholic faith. It became a crime punishable

by death to be a priest, or even to harbor a priest, as it was to attend Mass. Inadvertently, Catholics did everything possible to keep Elizabeth on her throne by excommunicating her and trying to assassinate her, and trying to invade England by means of the Armada. Our bad, but one must remember that thousands were dying in England and Philip of Spain thought it was his duty to save them by means of the Armada. Far fetched by our standards, but not by theirs.

Let's talk about the Armada for a moment. Sir Francis Drake – as portrayed by Errol Flynn in one of his best swashbucklers, "The Sea Hawk" (1940)– had spent 1585 to 1587 robbing Spanish Catholic colonies in the New World and attacking the Spanish port of Cadiz. He made sure that Elizabeth got her share of the plundered churches and colonies and she winked at his piracy. No matter what a swell picture Sea Hawk was, Francis Drake was a murdering thug.

Rathlin has been the site of a number of infamous massacres. An expedition in 1557 by Sir Henry Sidney in 1557 devastated the island. Francis Drake was the perpetrator of the massacre of Rathlin Island in Ireland in July 1575. Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Essex ordered Francis Drake and John Norreys to kill about six hundred women and children of Clan MacDonnell, who had taken refuge on the island. We all know that the Spanish were nasty and the English noble. We see it in the movies all the time. After, all, we Americans learn our history and our theology from television. The myth of the nasty Spanish and the noble English is called the Black Legend. Look it up some day.

When, in 1587, Elizabeth beheaded her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots who had fled to her for help, and whom most of the world regarded as the legitimate queen of England. King Philip II finally had enough and launched the Armada (fleet) in 1588. When it failed largely due to poor planning, bad weather and that sneaky Catholic hater, Francis Drake, Philip had the bells of all the churches in Spain rung in thanksgiving for the defeat. It was the will of God. Philip, like his father, was very staunch.

It is still rather ironic that Mary succeeded in killing only 280 Protestants give or take, giving her the name "Bloody Mary" while Elizabeth and her administration managed to kill thousands of Catholics for which she is called "Good Queen Bess." As her reign ended, prices rose and the standard of living fell. Catholics were more and more persecuted and she created a

system of spies and propaganda to weed out any criticism of her regime.

Elizabeth never married. She dallied with favorites and strung along foreign princes. In her old age she loved the flattery of younger men and was unable to face the fact that she was no longer the young princess. Her refusal to marry meant that there was no clear heir to the English throne when she died, and this will prove interesting in our next Episode.

She died in April of 1603. It is said that she stood for hours on end, knowing that when she sat, she would never stand again. Some say it's a myth, but she is thought to have said as she died, "All I posses for one moment of time. . . ." In all of Anglo-American history there are few lives as sad. She had seen countless of her own family executed for God alone knows what reason. She lived under the constant threat of violent death. Her only goal in life seems to have been to survive. Her last word seems a little more plausible than some scholars admit.

For our purpose in figuring out how things in the Catholic Church of the late 20th century got so screwy, Elizabeth's contribution is really quite simple. She wasn't much of a Protestant, but she certainly didn't like Catholicism. She really didn't care that much about the whole business. She cared about Elizabeth, and she was going to have a Church that did what she wanted, an English Church. She liked the grandeur of Catholic liturgy, and so retained bishops and priests and sacraments and vestments. She did not, however, like all that supernatural religious nonsense that gave those priests real power. She would have power; they would be ornamental and useful for the creation of the myth of Elizabeth. Elizabeth's handlers found just the right man to succeed her, a Scotsman, James Stuart for whom the Church of England was just right, not too Catholic, not too Protestant.

Chapter 10

Kissing Cousins And The King James Bible

January 15, 2011

Let us move on to the next branch of the Tudor family, the Stuarts. They were descended from Henry VIII's sister Margaret who had been married off to James IV, King of Scotland. (Family name: Stuart). Her granddaughter was Mary, the same "Mary, Queen of Scots, whom, you will remember, Queen Elizabeth Tudor, her cousin, had beheaded in our last episode. Pretty much everyone else in the family had been beheaded by now, so cousin James Stuart (1566-1625), already King of Scotland, was invited to be King of England.

The weather and the food may be bad in England, but have you ever been to Scotland? They eat haggis! So of course, James was glad to take the job and moved to London in 1603. He had been King of Scotland since 1567 when he was only thirteen months old. 1567 had been a rough year for the little fellow. His father, Lord Darnley, also a member of the Tudor clan, and the Stuarts, was blown to bits by a "mysterious" explosion. (I know all the names of these incestuous axe murderers are hard to keep track of, but try to pay attention.) Little James' mother (Mary, Queen of Scots) was a very unpopular queen, being Catholic in a country that had gone Calvinist. She married again and that was the straw that broke the Presbyterian camel's back. Protestants arrested Mary and she never saw her son again. He was made king, and was never quite right for some reason. Very nervous child. All that marrying cousins, beheading and exploding. It's tough to be working

full time at the age of one. And work he did. His life from that time on was controlled by tutors who beat him and by some very disagreeable politicians. Not a lot of down time in his young life. No wonder he had issues.

Most of the men in this very odd family had the reputation of being, well, friendly. Remember all those ladies in waiting? Not so James. He developed a reputation unusual for a king of the era. In his youth he had a reputation for chastity. In fact, he seemed uninterested in women. Who can blame him. They seemed to lose their heads so regularly. He was known for a series of really good male friends all his life whom he let run the country and spend his money. Scholarly opinion holds that they were just good friends, so don't even go there. Being a monarch, marry he must, and a Protestant princess was required for the job. His handlers chose Anne of Denmark. He dutifully sailed to Norway, where she had been stranded in 1589 and brought her home. He really seemed to care for her and he had three surviving children with her and quite a few who didn't survive. She was something he had never before seen: a royal woman with a functioning head.

At this time he visited Denmark, where witch hunts were all the rage. This may have piqued his interest in the study of witchcraft, in as much as he considered it a branch of theology. (Perhaps he had a point). Upon his return to Scotland, he attended a few witch trials. James worried much over the threat posed by witchcraft to him as monarch and, and actually wrote "Daemonologie", a small book about witchcraft that seems to have provided material for Shakespeare's "Macbeth." James personally supervised the torture of women accused of being witches. At least none of them were his wives. Quite a family. Well, enough with the gossip.

James was actually something of a scholar. Start learning Latin, Greek and Hebrew before you're five, and you're bound to learn something. James took a lively interest in literary endeavors and issued an authorized version of the Bible. We know it as the King James Bible, though it has undergone revisions since James first authorized it. It is thought that he himself may have worked on some parts of the translation. He wanted an authorized church, just like his predecessor Elizabeth and this meant an authorized bible.

At this point, we Catholics made a huge public relations blunder. On November 5, 1605, a Catholic named Guy Fawkes was found with 36 barrels of gunpowder preparing to blow up the parliament building where, on the next day the entire government including king, queen, royal family, parliament and all

would be present. Thus started Guy Fawkes Day and thus ended any remaining sympathy for Catholicism in England until sometime a couple months ago when Pope Benedict went to visit England. The whole effect of the gunpowder plot was to make James more anxious than ever to enforce religious conformity, whether the non-conformists were Catholic or Protestant.

James faced growing financial pressures, partly due to inflation but still more to his financial incompetence. All that upper class male bonding isn't cheap. James' lavish court and life style caused him to argue constantly with parliament, who alone could authorize new taxes, and there were more and more Puritans in parliament who didn't know why they should pay for the party, so James disbanded parliament and tried to go it alone. And then James made a truly stupid move. He thought that if he could marry his son Charles off to a Spanish princess, there would be a huge dowry. That meant, however, that the next queen of England would be Catholic, and that was not going to happen as far as the Protestant Parliament was concerned. James told them to mind their own business. In 1623 the match fell through and James died in 1625 leaving his son Charles to cope.

Charles, it turned out, couldn't cope. He believed that a king could do anything he wanted, so he married a French princess, Henrietta Maria, who raised their children pretty much as Catholics. He continued to let his father's last best buddy, the Duke of Buckingham run the country. Buckingham lost a war with Spain, and got himself assassinated, and then Charles ran things on his own, fighting a running battle with parliament over money and religion. Civil war broke out and parliament decided who needs a king? And, you guessed it, they cut King Charles head off. These people are nothing if not consistent. What has this, you may be asking, to do with the Hootenanny Mass? These events are directly responsible for the founding of Calvinist America by the Puritans, and no Calvinist America, no Hootenanny Mass.

Chapter 11

There Goes The Neighborhood. A Problem With Undocumented Immigrants

January 22, 2011

Let us pause to look at some dates, not the edible kind. Queen Elizabeth I (Tudor) ruled England from 1558 to1603. King James ruled England from 1603 to 1625 and his son, Charles Stuart, a.k.a. King Charles I of England, ruled from 1625 to 1649. So, you have 100 years of the Church of England and Tudors/Stuarts, and what a century it was!

Elizabeth wanted a church that looked Catholic but thought Protestant, as had her father, Henry, before her. Her cousins the Stuarts thought that was just fine. Beginning in 1559, all English citizens were required to attend Church of England services on Sundays and holy days. One was fined for each service missed. Those conducting unauthorized services were fined more heavily, imprisoned and occasionally executed for sedition.

Calvinists and Catholics were not happy with the Elizabethan compromise. For Catholics it was too Protestant. For Calvinists it was too Catholic, or as they would say "popish." (I've always thought that was a swell word.) Calvinists were not one cohesive group. There was a spectrum of Calvinist opinion. Some Puritans could put up with Anglican worship, but others, called Separatists or non-conformists, would have none of it. An Anglican

Archbishop, Matthew Hutton, could not abide Calvin's separatist followers, but showed some sympathy for Puritans expressed in a letter to Robert Cecil, Secretary of State to James I in 1604:

"The Puritans, whose phantasticall zeale I mislike, though they differ in Ceremonies and accidentes, yet they agree with us in substance of religion, and I thinke all or the moste parte of them love his Majestie, and the presente state, and I hope will yield to conformitie. But the Papistes are opposite and contrarie in very many substantiall pointes of religion, and cannot but wishe the Popes authoritie and popish religion to be established." (Apparently people in merrye olde England had an odd way of spelling.)

A particular group of radical Separatists in the town of Scrooby (name not made up) in Nottinghamshire, England, were persecuted by King James' government. In 1607 Tobias Matthew, Archbishop of York, raided homes and imprisoned several members of the Separatist Puritan congregation, so they abandoned England with its established church that smacked of popery, with its priests and bishops and vestments and superstitious rituals that looked suspiciously like Mass. They fled to Holland, where they found themselves second class citizens even among their Dutch Calvinist co-religionists. They were unable to speak the language and could barely get work and, heaven forfend, their children were becoming just too Dutch! So it was off to the wilderness of America to invent Thanksgiving and televised football.

In 1620, the Scrooby Separatists, later called Pilgrims by William Bradford, arrived in what is now Massachusetts aboard the Mayflower. Upon landing they found some mounds that turned out to be native graves which they promptly robbed. Taking some of the provisions for the dead which had been placed in the graves, they also found an iron kettle in which they placed some of the corn they found and re-buried the rest to use later as seed corn. William Bradford wrote: "They also found two of the Indian's houses covered with mats, and some of their implements in them; but the people had run away and could not be seen. They also found more corn, and beans of various colors. These they brought away, intending to give them full satisfaction (repayment) when they should meet with any of them, - as about six months afterwards they did."

So began the story of the first Thanksgiving: grave robbing and home invasion. It all sounds a little like a Calvinist version of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. In a short time most of the settlers had become ill, and ridden

with scurvy. It was December and there had already been snow. As they explored the area, they saw their first native people, who fled from them. It was not the first time that the locals had met the English. The English had already been there for fishing and trade even before Mayflower. One local tribe, the Pokanoket really disliked the English after a bunch of them had been rounded up, taken on board ship and shot.

Captain Thomas Hunt, a slave hunter also came calling and captured a couple dozen natives to sell as slaves back home in Europe. One of them was the famous Squanto. Admittedly, he sold his captives in Catholic Spain, but when some Franciscan friars found out what he was up to, they freed the Americans, and taught them Christianity. Squanto convinced the friars to let him try to return home. He made his way to London, worked on his English, and managed to sail back home. There he found his entire village dead of European diseases and pilgrims living on his family farm. He spoke English well and was able to mediate between native and thus insured the colonists' survival. The colonists returned the favor by almost completely wiping out the native population who, as the years went by, had the temerity to fight for the land that they had once owned.

Let us briefly return to merrye olde England, which was becoming less and less merrye. King James was not the Separatists' idea of a Godly sovereign and so more of them decided to move to America. In 1621, a second ship carrying more colonists came from England, boosting the population to 85. In 1623, it was up to 180. In 1630 it was around 300 and in 1643, around 2000. Between 1630 and 1640, in the so-called Great Migration, 20,000 settlers arrived in Massachusetts. Perhaps the Indians should have put up a fence or something at the border.

The Puritans were abandoning England by the boat load, literally. James was bad enough but his son, Charles, was worse. He wanted to move the Church of England away from Calvinism and even married a Catholic French Princess in 1525, and that was the last straw. A series of events began that eventually ended in Charles being beheaded by the parliamentary Puritans; a king of England losing his head over a woman. Now there's a switch.

The Calvinists in Parliament decided that they could manage without the King and his popish relatives, and so in a series of civil wars that lasted from 1642 to 1655, they overthrew the royalist government and, in 1649, cut off Charles' head. They declared a Commonwealth ruled by a Council of

State, which included Oliver Cromwell, a general of the Puritan forces. The royalists were finally completely defeated in one more Civil War and during which Cromwell conquered Catholic Ireland. The butcher's bill for keeping England Calvinist and Protestant was incalculable, almost one million people in England Scotland and Ireland taken as a whole, lands of which Cromwell was the Lord "Protector". Forty percent of Ireland's population died of war and manufactured famine in one of the most brutal ethnic cleansings in history. At the Siege of Drogheda in September 1649, Cromwell's troops massacred nearly 3,500 people after the town's capture, soldiers, civilians, prisoners, and Roman Catholic priests, burning many of them alive in their church. Cromwell wrote of the event:

> I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbued their hands in so much innocent blood and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future, which are satisfactory grounds for such actions, which otherwise cannot but work remorse and regret.

This was just one of many massacres. In addition to the starvation and murder of at least 600,000, some 50,000 Irish were sold as slaves during the time of the English Commonwealth. Oliver Cromwell is certainly among the greatest mass murderers in human history. Curiously enough, the last battle of the English civil wars was fought in America. In 1655, at the Battle of the Severn, Puritans defeated the governor of Maryland, William Stone who was fighting to restore his government in the colony and its policy of religious toleration.

Once again what has this to do with the Hootenanny Mass? The heart of the matter is found in the Mayflower compact. It is the foundational document of the country even more than the Declaration of Independence and almost no one has ever heard of it. Before getting off the ship the colonists created a form of government that depended on nothing but its own will. "(We) Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic..." the document read. Not God not King, not custom nor law, but, "(we) the body politic." In this document, the modern world was born, and nothing is so modern as the Hootenanny Mass and all that came with it. We will govern ourselves. Not popes nor bishops, nor kings nor customs.

Chapter 12

The Mayflower Goes To Seed; The Pilgrims And Their Descendants

January 29, 2011

In our last exciting episode, we read how around 50 English separatists established the Plymouth plantation in 1620. They were Calvinist and, in the religious sense, non-conformists for whom the Church of England was still too "popish" and for whom Holland was just too, well, Dutch. We know them as "the Pilgrims". They were soon followed by the Puritans (also Calvinists, but for whom the Church of England wasn't quite that awful) They founded places like Boston in order to escape that religious popishness and frippery back in England. And they just kept coming.

In 1630, the Puritan John Winthrop received a charter from the King to found the Massachusetts Bay Colony of which he would be governor. He led a fleet of eleven ships carrying 700 English Puritans. That was the beginning of the Great Migration in which 20,000 colonists came to New England between 1630 to 1640. The Puritans found themselves increasingly alienated from the Church of England and soon joined forces with the separatist pilgrims. In 1648, at the request of the Massachusetts General Court, a synod of ministers from Massachusetts and Connecticut, met to draw up an agreement called the Cambridge Platform defining Puritan Congregationalism and in effect, the government of New England. The agreement defines the church as "a company of saints by calling, united into one body by a holy covenant, for the public worship of God, and the mutual edification of one another in the

fellowship of the Lord Jesus." No King, no Pope, no Bishops no Presbyters. The church consisted of the congregation, governing itself without reference to external authority. Thus, the Puritan settlers established a sort of unified theocratic political system which went on to give us the Salem witch trials. The birth of the United States could be as well defined by this document as by the Declaration of Independence.

Back in England, the English were tired of government by Presbyterians and, and wishing once again to be merry, restored the Stuarts as kings in 1660. The Stuarts, in turn, published the "Act of Uniformity" (1662),which said all ministers had to be ordained by the Church of England, and swear an oath to abide by its rules. In other words, conform or get out. More than 2000 Puritans ministers refused to swear and were tossed out of their jobs in an event called the Great Ejection. And so, they just kept coming to New England.

They came to these fair shores for religious freedom and the right to squash anyone they disagreed with. Dissenters likes Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams founded Rhode Island when they were banished from Massachusetts for heresy. In 1636, some Puritans went south and settled Connecticut with its rich soil. For some reason this worried the local Americans(by "Americans" I mean the original indigenous population) who decided that enough was enough. They tried to regain their land and independence in the Pequot War (1634-38) and in King Philip's War (1675-76). (King Philip, being another name for Metacom, chief of the Wampanoags.) The Wampanoags and the Pequots got clobbered and the era of the Native Americans was over. The Pilgrims whom they had sustained in those first hard winters had taken the natives' land and sold some of them into slavery in Bermuda, some fled to other tribes beyond the reach of the English. Others were confined to small settlements as they would be until our present times, until they figured out how to get back what the palefaces had stolen by inviting us to their gambling casinos and selling us tax-free cigarettes.

The Americans didn't entirely give up. A little less than a century later they allied themselves with the Catholic French in order to stem the unending flow of English colonists at the Appalachians. This was called the French and Indian war (French and Indians against the English, 1754-1763), which the case can be made, George Washington started by shooting the French ambassador at Fort Dusquesne, now known as Pittsburgh. This of course led

to the American Revolution which led in turn to us. It also led to Cajun cuisine and Zydeko, because Massachusetts Governor William Shirley deported the French Catholic Acadians from Nova Scotia to New Orleans as part of the war. The war cost money and the British thought that the New Englanders should help pay for it. After all, the war had been fought to protect New England from its former owners, the Indians. The descendants of the Puritans refused to pay and so Massachusetts became "Cradle of Liberty". New England had always disliked the Church of England and its head, the king, and so what had been religious separatism increasingly became just separatism. It is to be remembered that people like Sam Adams and his cousin John Adams and their friend John Hancock and that crowd, were the descendants of the Puritans.

You would be amazed at who is descended from the Puritans. Presidents John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Zachary Taylor, Ulysses S. Grant, James A. Garfield, Franklin D. Roosevelt, George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush are all descended from the 50 Mayflower survivors. That's just the 50 on the Mayflower. By 1640 there were at least 20,000 more Puritans in New England. Millions of modern day Americans are descended from the Puritans, among them President Barak Obama. Barack Obama, a Pilgrim? I'm not making this up. Barack Obama is a 13th-generation descendant of Thomas Blossom, one of the Plymouth colony's earliest settlers, and is a cousin of the Bushes. The wonder of it all! These are only some of the physical descendants of the pilgrims. The Puritan founders of New England have innumerably more moral, philosophical theological descendants.

We have to remember that there were two principal English colonies in the Americas. Now you know more about the Plymouth Plantation than you ever wanted to. There is also Jamestown in Virginia named in honor of King James I. It was in effect, the Church of England's colony. The Puritans of the north were the fathers of the American revolution, of the abolition movement, of the industrial revolution and on and on. The Jamestown settlers were the founders of the planter aristocracy of the south. These two opposing philosophies met head on in the English Civil War, and once again in the American Civil War. For the southern Anglicans, the Book of Common Prayer was normative. It was offensive to northern Puritans. The Book of Common Prayer is filled with vestiges of the Catholic past. In particular it contains prayers for the king, to ask God "to be his defender and keeper, giving him victory over all his enemies." In the American revolution, this

amounted to treason, and so Anglicans in America became Episcopalian, and ultimately the Puritanism of New England triumphed over the Anglicanism of Virginia.

Well, again you may ask, what has this to do with the Hootenanny Mass? When Governor John Winthrop was on his way to America with his flotilla of 11 ships crammed with Puritans among whom were the ancestors of almost everyone important in America today including Thomas Blossom, ancestor of Barak Hussein Obama, while still on board, Governor Winthrop delivered a sermon entitled, "A Model of Christian Charity" to his fellow Puritans. In this address he called their new colony "a city upon a hill" a phrase taken from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:14, he says, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." Perhaps this is the heart of the American Puritan ethos. It is the first clear enunciation and perhaps the root of American exceptionalism, the Puritan belief that the United States is more favored by God than other nations. The Spanish colonies did not think of themselves as exceptional. They were part of a universal church and looked back to Spain. The Virginia colonists looked back to England to which they referred lovingly as the mother country. The Puritans called themselves the godly and believed that God had given them this land by destroying its native inhabitants by plague and war, and they compared themselves to the Israelites and their promised land, cleared of its Canaanite inhabitants. They were special. They were the city on a hill, created to teach the rest of the world how to do it right.

On January 9, 1961, another Bostonian, John F. Kennedy spoke to the General Court of Massachusetts, quoting Winthrop's sermon. "I have been guided by the standard John Winthrop set before his shipmates on the flagship Arbella three hundred and thirty-one years ago, as they, too, faced the task of building a new government on a perilous frontier." John Kennedy, the first Catholic President of the United States who said during his campaign that his Catholicism would not impinge on his presidency. Now do you see how the Puritan forbears are the fathers of the Hootenanny Mass, and of so much modern American "Catholicism"?

Chapter 13

"The Pot Of Beans At The End Of The Rainbow."

February 4, 2011

Let us summarize. The English Puritans came to America with a lot of baggage: Henry VIII opened the English Door to Calvin and Luther and their Puritan followers. Luther taught the Puritans, "Bible alone, Faith alone, Grace without works, predestination, or once saved always saved. Mass is not a sacrifice. It is a meal made for the instruction and consolation of the faithful." Calvin taught them, "The individual inspired by the Holy Spirit needs no pope, nor priest nor bishop to interpret the Bible. The individual inspired by the Holy Spirit is sufficient for the interpretation of the Bible. Each individual congregation is the Church and can govern itself, hence Congregationalism. The congregation, being the Church, elects its own ministers. Man is totally corrupt, but the chosen are chosen, to hell, literally, with the rest of humanity.

With these high ideals 20,000 or 30,000 Puritans left old England for New England. If Catholic means universal, Puritanism was anti-Catholic to its core. Puritans fled England and its established Church which they considered too Catholic. And so they came to America to found, "the city on the hill", in the words of their first governor, John Winthrop. That hill was Beacon Hill in Boston. The descendants of the Puritans established themselves as the aristocracy of New England, the Boston "Brahmins", Yankee's are upper class families with an exclusive life style, accent and alma mater: Harvard

University (or as they call it Haaavuhd.) There are southern counterparts like the First Families of Virginia but remember they lost round four of the English Civil War, which they called the War of Northern Aggression (You may have heard it referred to as the Civil War.)

Harvard, established in 1636 at the height of the Great Puritan Migration to New England, was named for its first benefactor, the Puritan pastor, John Harvard. It is interesting to note that Harvard University is the first corporation chartered in this country. It is in fact more than a century older than this country. Harvard boasts a long list of this country's leaders, Among them, George W. Bush and his cousin, Barak Obama, who attended the school founded by his Pilgrim ancestors, and of course John, Bobby and Teddy Kennedy attended. Although it was never formally affiliated with a church, at its beginning and for a long time there after, the college primarily trained Congregationalist and Unitarian clergy. As the 18th and 19th centuries rolled on, Harvard became increasingly secular and yet somehow remained Puritan. It produces a kind of Puritanism without God. In fact, it sometimes seems entirely purified of the divine presence.

Some interesting comparisons: Harvard has 691 acres in three campuses. The Vatican has 110 acres. So Harvard is 6 times larger than the Vatican. The Vatican employs about 3,500 people, Harvard has about 21,000 students and about 11,000 employees. . . And now here's the kicker: the Vatican, at least in 2007, had a surplus of $10 million dollars. ($10,000,000) Harvard has an endowment of $27.4 Billion ($27,400,000,000) so in a certain sense, Harvard is 2,740 times richer than the pope. Next time someone says to me why doesn't the pope do more to help the poor, just say, "Maybe Harvard could kick in a little.."

Where was I? Oh yes, the City on the Hill. This Puritan Paradise was threatened beginning in 1820 with an immigration of Irish that swelled to a flood during the potato famine of the 1840's. Signs proliferated "Irish need not apply." The Puritans had fled the very taint of Catholicism in England and here was Catholicism flooding in to the stronghold of Puritan Protestantism. The Irish Catholics, needless to say, were about as welcome as lice. The young aristocrats of Beacon Hill and their poor Irish neighbors enjoyed frequent street fights well into the 20th century.

Not all Catholics wanted to battle the Puritans. Some wanted to join their country clubs. There arose in the last half of the 1800's a heresy called

Americanism. Many Catholics bought into the myth of the "city on the hill" – American exceptionalism, the belief that somehow America was a nation founded by the direct intervention of Heaven, different and better than other nations, and bound to bring its democratic revolution to all the world. The more ambitious of the Irish Catholics of Boston longed for nothing more than admittance into New England, none more so than the grandson of a poor immigrant, Joseph P. Kennedy, Catholic, banker, statesman, bootlegger, philanderer, and, of course, Harvard graduate. Kennedy broke into the American aristocracy by supporting the bluest of the blue bloods, Franklin D. Roosevelt in his run for President in 1932 . Kennedy raised quite a bit of money for Roosevelt's campaign, and in turn received an appointment as the Chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, though he had wanted a cabinet position for his troubles. When asked why he had hired such a crook, Roosevelt replied, "Takes one to catch one."

In 1938, Roosevelt appointed Kennedy ambassador to England. In Boston he was still regarded an outsider, but in England he was the grand man. Imagine, the grandson of a potato farmer from county Wexford in southern Ireland being presented at court! Joe Kennedy's daughter, Kathleen, married the Duke of Devonshire, and joined the Kennedys of Wexford to one of England's most aristocratic families. It was nice, but it still wasn't as good as being welcomed into the parlors of the mansions on Beacon Hill in Boston. If he could get one of his sons elected President of the United States, that would show them. His eldest son was killed in the war, but there was still Jack. In the 1952 senate race, John F. Kennedy successfully defeated Henry Cabot Lodge, heir to one of the most prestigious Puritan names in Boston. It is interesting to note that Henry Cabot Lodge's grandfather had rebuked John F. Kennedy's grandfather for a vote in the state senate that favored immigrants. Lodge said to Kennedy that "Jews and Italians had no right to this country," and by implication, neither did the Irish Catholics. Well, when Joe got his son John elected president of the United States, the Kennedys had arrived, by hook or by crook, and there was a great deal of crook. Jack Kennedy said that his father had asked him the exact number of votes he would need to win because there "was no way I'm paying for a landslide." Everyone mistakenly thought JFK was joking. Some joke. The family called in quite a few favors to win that election. Their Hollywood connections roped in Frank Sinatra who, in turn, roped in some of his friends in Chicago. "Hizzoner da Mare" as we say in Chicago (Mayor Richard J.

Daley) was also very helpful in winning Illinois which along with Texas gave Kennedy the electoral college. Everything was done that had to be done to win the presidency for Jack and aristocracy for the family. And one thing that was done touches directly on the Hootenanny Mass.

Kennedy's Catholicism was a problem for the Puritans he wanted to govern and whose ranks his father so wanted to join politically and socially. JFK assured the Greater Houston Ministerial Association on September 12, 1960, "I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party candidate for President who also happens to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my Church on public matters, and the Church does not speak for me." In other words, Kennedy could be one thing politically and another spiritually, and that compromise brought Catholicism into the mainstream of American life, or did it bring Puritan America into the heart of the Catholic Church?

By the way, about baked beans. It is theorized that Boston baked beans were a meal that could be made before the Sabbath and the Godly Puritan housewives of Boston could feed their families a hot, nourishing meal without violating their principles. There may not have been gold at the end of the immigration rainbow, but there were Puritan beans. Give me Italian Catholic food any day.

Chapter 14

Boston Baked Beans Meet Irish Stew

February 11, 2011

There was a battle royal in America during the 19th Century, and I don't mean the Civil War. It was fought between the German Catholic clergy and the Irish Catholic Clergy. Germans had been emigrating to the Americas since the 1680's, but the great immigration started in earnest after the American revolution. In the 1700's, the largest export of Hesse was its sons, in the form of mercenary soldiers. Georg von Braunschwieg-Lueneburg, King of England, (You may have heard of him referred to as George III) hired the Hessians to help him stamp out the "Presbyterian Revolt" in America. The Presbyterians won, and a lot of us Hessians decided to stay in America. Nice place. No hereditary nobility. Lots of free land vacated by friendly Indians.

Hessians went back home and told the rest of us and we started coming over. Around 1830, my family started emigrating to Detroit, a nice little French town. There had been a Catholic Church there since 1701. Things really picked up after the failed revolution of 1848. That's when my great-great grandpa, Johann von Schmalzegau came to Cincinnati (Zinzinati, as Grandma called it) where he drank himself to death. (Have you ever BEEN to Cincinnati?) In 1866, my mother's grandfather left Hesse and moved to Detroit in order to dodge the draft. Otto von Bismarck, mastermind of the modern German state, and inspiration for the jelly doughnut, was quickly taking over Germany and whenever a boy in grandma's village turned draft age, he got on a boat, said goodbye to the new Deutschland and went to work

with Uncle Anton in the furniture business in Amerika. From 1830 to about 1900, my people left the old country, draft dodger by draft dodger. Germans were as likely to be Protestant as Catholic, and the Puritans' descendants thought them close enough to the "Anglo-Saxon Race" not to mind them. The IRISH! Now that was a different matter.

Irish Catholics were hardly Anglo-Saxon. They started coming over around 1820 and then during the Great Famine, largely engineered by the English, It was emigrate or die. In a population of perhaps 8 million, one million died and one million left for "Amerikee." They were desperately poor and desperately Catholic and were given the most menial of jobs, but they spoke English. Their votes were courted by the politicians of New York and Boston and community leaders who could get out the vote were rewarded with political jobs. The Boston Brahmins sneered at them, but needed them. They were good enough to be the cops on the beat, but not good enough to join the country club. Irish, as the saying went, "need not apply". There is another saying: "Forbidden fruits are sweetest."

Poor Catholic laborers longed for the standard of living that their Protestant neighbors enjoyed. Catholics were excluded from most labor organizations. If a poor Catholic worker wanted to join a fraternal organization he had to join a Protestant one, if they would let him in. It was precisely this situation that prompted the Venerable Fr. Michael McGivney to found the Knights of Columbus, as a mutual aid society. When the breadwinner of a family died, as often happened under the difficult conditions to which the Irish immigrants were exposed, his widow and children ended up on the street. McGivney wanted to provide a way for them to have some security in a country that cared little for them. K. of C. was a Catholic alternative.

Meanwhile, as the Irish and other non-Protestant, "lesser races" crowded into east coast slums, the Puritan "City on a Hill" was discovering American Exceptionalism and its manifest destiny.

American Exceptionalism is the belief that the United States is qualitatively different, superior to other nations. After the Civil War, Americans liked to think that the best of Anglo-Saxon England had come to America with the Puritans. The Anglo-Saxon "race", tracing itself back to the freedom loving Germanic tribes that had defeated decadent Rome would bring about the (Protestant) Christian Millennium. America was, after all, the city on a hill. American social Darwinists loved this nonsense. In 1885, Josiah Strong

wrote "Our Country" in which he justified U.S. imperialism by referring to Charles Darwin and the Bible. Strong, a Protestant clergyman, claimed that the Anglo-Saxon race, that is America, was destined to bring Christianity to the world. Thus, American imperialism was a religious duty! Back in Mother England Rudyard Kipling wrote "Take Up the White Man's Burden" in 1899 and subtitled it, "the United to Take up the White Man's burden–Send forth the best ye breed–Your new-caught sullen peoples,(Filipino Catholics) Half devil and half child... slowly (lead them) toward the light.... (They may ask) Why brought ye us from bondage, Our loved Egyptian night?.. The silent sullen peoples.... Shall weigh your God and you." It seems rather clear that as far as Rudyard was concerned God was Protestant and the Devil was Catholic.

Teddy Roosevelt and his friends believed all this nonsense wholeheartedly but worried that the Anglo-Saxon race was being diluted by the influx of inferiors. What was needed was a nice, victorious war to restore America's Anglo-Saxon "virility." The remnants of the Spanish Empire were nearby. War became an inevitability. We call it the Spanish American War, but in fact, it started as the War of Cuban Independence and was hijacked by a bunch of Harvard grads (and a smattering of men from Yale, Dartmouth and Brown). Cuban hopes for independence were used to extend the American Empire to the Philippines, Guam, Cuba and Puerto Rico. Men like Teddy Roosevelt and William Randolph Hurst, Harvard men both, incessantly beat the drums of war. President McKinley, not a Harvard man, had originally been opposed to the war, but in the words of John Hay, (Brown University, Rhode Island) Ambassador to England, it was "such a splendid little war." He joined the war faction.

After it was all over, McKinley paced the White House halls, worried about what he was going to do with all these non-white, non-Protestant millions that had suddenly become the responsibility of the United States. He told a group of Methodist ministers, "I am not ashamed to tell you, I fell to my knees... and prayed... for light and guidance... One night late, it came to me... There was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos and uplift them and Christianize them." And that applied to Guam, Puerto Rico and Cuba. It never occurred to McKinley that those lesser peoples had been Christian for four centuries, heirs to a Spanish Catholic Tradition that went back to the first century. When the Anglo-Saxons had been painting themselves blue and chasing around the

forests of Germany with pointy sticks, the founders of the Christianity of these distant places were already believers. The war was religious as well as military. Protestants focally divided Puerto Rico among their different denominations and influenced government policy until the 1940's. Though less formally, the same theological invasion arrived in the Philippines and Cuba.

At the same time, the struggle for dominance in the Catholic Church in America was going strong and the Irish were winning. No one wanted to be as American as the Irish Bishops of the late nineteenth century. In order to be accepted in the New World, they embraced American Exceptionalism, or as Pope Leo called it, the "Americanist Heresy."

We Catholics believe in the religious authority of the Bishop of Rome and the universal humanity of all people. For us there are no master races. In 1899, Pope Leo XIII condemned Americanism in his encyclical Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae. "We are not able to give approval to... "Americanism." There can be no... doubt that... the bishops of America, would be the first to repudiate.. (Americanism) ... For it would give rise to the suspicion that there are... some who... would have the Church in America to be different from what it is in the rest of the world... the true Church is one, as by unity of doctrine, so by unity of government.. Wherefore, if anybody wishes to be considered a real Catholic, he ought to.. be able to say... the words which Jerome addressed to Pope Damasus, I... am bound in fellowship... with the chair of Peter. I know that the Church was built upon him as its rock, and that whosoever gathereth not with you, scattereth."

America at the time was full of societies; fraternal orders, new religious movements, self-betterment clubs, and the temperance movement. Catholics had always shied away from such groups in Europe, but in America things were different. If the Church banned participation in civic organizations it would seem undemocratic and to ban membership in the temperance movement would bring charges of "Rum, Romanism and Ruin", especially among the Irish who had been unjustly labeled by the Puritan establishment. The Germans saw no need for temperance unions. After all, Germans don't drink that much, do they? The Irish tended to embrace these movements, but the Germans, in addition to their respect for beer, also had a language issue. To lose the German language would be to lose German culture. So German Catholics fought to have German parishes and schools that used the sweet,

musical German language. Germans were increasingly relegated to second class status as the Irish bishops "Americanized" the Church. The German clergy petitioned Rome to strengthen ethnic parishes in large cities and to assign parishioners to the church of their particular ethnicity. The Irish American bishops lobbied against these requests and Rome initially seemed to side with Americanization.

Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Bishop John Keane of Richmond and Cardinal James Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore, the only Cardinal in America at the time, were some of the leaders of the Americanist movement. While touring France, Ireland said "The Church in Europe is asleep." and "The people is king now!" Ireland also thought Eastern Rite Catholics un-American. In 1891, Ireland refused to allow Greek-Catholic priest Alexis Toth, to minister to his flock even though Toth had jurisdiction from his own Bishop. Ireland wanted to expel all Eastern Catholic clergy from the United States. Another ally of the Americanists, Msgr. Denis O'Connell wrote to Archbishop Ireland in 1898, that the Spanish "greasers" lives are not worth those of the Americans fighting them in Cuba. O'Connell also called for the closing of convents and monasteries in our newly conquered possessions, because religious orders had done nothing for the advancement of religion.

With the help of O'Connell, the Americanist movement had a lasting influence on Catholic scholarship. The Catholic University was founded by the Americanist bishops Spalding, Ireland and Keane. Rome gave its approval in 1887, thanks to Ireland and Keane, who had gone to Rome to lobby. With Monsignor, later bishop, Denis O'Connell as rector of the North American College in Rome, soon to be rector of The Catholic University of America, the Americanists influenced the pastoral and theological future of the Church in America.

The Americanist Heresy was soon forgotten, but the harm was done. The ground was ready for the perfect storm of modernism, ecumenism, and Annibale Bugnini. (Did he say ecumenism? What's wrong with Ecumenism?)

Chapter 15

Shall We Eat Our Cookies Inside The House Or Outside The House?

February 18, 2011

Why, pray tell, are you digging up this ancient history about a war fought more than a century ago? What can this possibly have to do with the Hootenanny Mass? Well, it isn't as ancient as you might think! When I was a boy, in the groovy sixties and early seventies, an impressionable lad in a Jesuit University, I had a Latin course with old Fr. Mertz. I loved the class. He didn't talk about Latin very much. He mostly talked about how he hated stinking pigeons. "Flying rats!" He called them. Occasionally he would take a shotgun to the roof of the tallest building on campus, Metrz Hall, KABOOM! There would be a shower of feathers and pigeons falling from the sky, like quail in the book of Exodus. He was not going to let pigeons roost on HIS building. It was a college dorm and when he found out what went on in that building, it being the early seventies, he wanted his name taken off it. No luck. It is Mertz Hall to this day. Where was I? Oh, yes. When he was not complaining about student debauchery and stinking pigeons, he would reminisce about the Spanish American War, and how grand it was to be a boy in such an heroic era. It was not that long ago.

The Spanish American War, so called, launched America onto the world stage. The few who opposed the war and subsequent empire went unheard by those who believed in the destiny of America was to civilize and Protestantize the world. Empire is deeply embedded in the American consciousness.

Already, in the 1780s, Thomas Jefferson, awaited the collapse of the Spanish empire: "...til our population can be sufficiently advanced to gain it from them piece by piece." He also wrote that, "History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government," and, "In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own." Jefferson, who never freed any of his own slaves, even in his last will, wrote our Declaration of Independence. He longed for an "Empire for Liberty". What emerged was an empire for slavery. The Mexican government welcomed American settlers into Texas, but required them to swear allegiance to the Mexican constitution of 1824 and practice the Catholic Faith. This meant that they could not own slaves. The Americans who emigrated into Mexican Texas soon revolted, not so much for their liberty but for the right to keep their slaves. The independence of Texas soon led to the Mexican-American War and the annexation of the United State of almost half of Mexico.

Thomas Jefferson's name sake, United States Senator Jefferson Davis, later President of the Confederate States of America, introduced an amendment to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to annex most of northeastern Mexico. It was not passed into law. Davis also said, "Cuba must be ours...to increase the number of slave-holding constituencies." So we had cast covetous eyes on Cuba and its millions of potential slaves half a century before we took it. Catholicism and the United States were on a collision course from the Puritan beginnings and things escalated to real bloodshed in the first part of the 19th century.

It is hard to believe that anti-Catholicism was one of the founding principals of this country, but anti-Catholicism is woven into the fabric of the nation. Few know that the Catholicism of Quebec is one of the reasons that the Protestant colonies left the British Empire. The Continental Congress, the founding assembly of the nation, wrote King George, protesting the Quebec Act of 1774 which allowed Quebec to remain Catholic though conquered by Protestant England. Here is a quote from the Continental Congress' letter to King George, "(French Catholics are) fit instruments in the hands of power, to reduce the ancient free Protestant Colonies to the same state of slavery with themselves. This was evidently the object of the Act:And in this view, being extremely dangerous to our liberty and quiet, we cannot forbear complaining of it, as hostile to British America...Nor can we suppress our

astonishment that a British Parliament should ever consent to establish in that country a religion that has deluged your island in blood, and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder and rebellion through every part of the world." The statement sounds like it was written yesterday by those who hate the Church for her opposition to abortion, and the other moral hot button issues of our time, I can hear a few of my more progressive friends saying "Amen! Preach it brother!" at the words, "blood (shed)... bigotry, persecution, murder."

Virulent anti-Catholicism has never left American politics, from then until now. By means of the invasion of Mexico, the government of the United States extended slavery into Catholic lands where it was already forbidden. Slavery was abolished by Hidalgo in 1810, and was formally abolished after the revolution in 1821. As the beginnings of empire stirred America, anti-foreign and anti-Catholic sentiment continued to grow. The American Party, better known as the "Know Nothings" because of their secrecy, was a reaction to German and Irish Catholic immigrants.

The movement originated in New York in 1843 and soon spread to the rest of the country. In 1836, the publication of Maria Monk's "Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery in Montreal." It told of the lascivious conduct of Catholic nuns. It was a runaway best seller even though it was shown to be pure fabrication shortly after publication. The civil war saw a lessening of formal attempts to restrict Catholicism in the US. Catholic immigrants fought on both sides of the conflict, and people who had never met a Catholic in their lives found themselves in the trenches with them and saw no visible evidence of horns, cloven hooves or tails. But the prejudice continued. The Ku Klux Klan renewed anti-Catholicism in the 1920s. In 1929, my parents were married in Little Flower, Catholic Church in 1929 built in 1925 in Royal Oak, Michigan, a Protestant suburb of Detroit. Two weeks after it opened, the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross on the church lawn.

I grew up surrounded by anti-Catholicism. My Aunt converted to Catholicism when she married my Uncle back in 1930. Her Aunt Olivia never quite forgave her. I remember Aunt "Ollie" explaining to me that nuns were at the "service" (remember it's a family column) of priests who entered convents via secret tunnels. If a child resulted, it was baptized and then promptly strangled and buried in the aforementioned tunnels. In my old age, I discovered that this is an exact quote from Maria Monk's bestseller. In 1960, I was

being fed a line of anti-Catholic drivel written in 1836.

Catholic were inferior beings in the Chicago suburb where I grew up. Jews were not welcome at all and Catholics were merely looked down on. I was not allowed into the home of the family across the street because I was a Catholic. I remember my friend going in to get a glass of water. I couldn't come in, because I was Catholic, but I could wait and he would be out in a few minutes. I have vague memories of his congregationalist mother once weakening and bringing me some cookies and lemonade out on the sidewalk. That was in 1955. In 1955, there were still enough jerks around to make a child feel less because of his religious affiliation. Can you imagine what four hundred years of cookies on the sidewalk did to the American Catholic consciousness? It made eating the cookies inside seem really important.

American exceptionalism flowered in the first and then the second world wars. We were cowboys to the rescue, then we went on to rescue Korea and then Vietnam and Laos and Cambodia and Lebanon and Granada, with a valiant attempt to get some other people to rescue Cuba, then we changed our minds, and then we decided to rescue Kuwait and Iraq and now we are rescuing Afghanistan. But in 1960, we were fresh from rescuing Europe and South Korea, and we could do no wrong and America was the envy of the world, or so we thought.

We Catholic Americans had finally arrived when Joe Kennedy finally triumphed. His boy, Jack, was elected the first Catholic president of the United States. The Boston Brahmins would have to let us into their country clubs now! I was 10 years old in 1960. John Kennedy was President and John XXIII was pope and he had just called for an Ecumenical council. To be American and Catholic was to be on the top of the heap. The future was going to be wonderful. Perhaps now the neighbors would invite me to eat my cookies inside instead of on the sidewalk. To be both American and Catholic was no longer a problem. was as exceptional as any red blooded American!

We had been the Catholic Church in America. Now people talked about the American Church. Three years later, both pope and president would be dead, but by then we were acceptable. American Catholicism and American exceptionalism had somehow fallen in love in those three years. That acceptance had come at a fearful price that few noticed at the time. The old Puritan prejudices died hard. It was doubted that a Catholic could be elected president of this Protestant nation. John Kennedy tackled the prob-

lem head on in his address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association on Sep 12, 1960. He said "I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public matters; and the church does not speak for me. Whatever issue may come before me as President, if I should be elected, on birth control, divorce, censorship, gambling or any other subject, I will make my decision... in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressure or dictates. And no power or threat of punishment could cause me to decide otherwise. But if the time should ever come – and I do not concede any conflict to be remotely possible – when my office would require me to either violate my conscience or violate the national interest, then I would resign the office; and I hope any conscientious public servant would do likewise."

He won the election. So a Catholic could be elected if he promised that he would follow his conscience, but not his faith. He said that he happened to be Catholic. Therein lies the problem. He happened to be Catholic. I do not happen to be Catholic. I choose to be Catholic, because I think it is the truth.

Chapter 16

A Fellow Named Hannibal Runs Off With Betty Cantu

February 24, 2011

A man whose first language was Spanish attended a lecture about the Second Vatican Council, usually called "Vatican Two". After the talk he asked "Who is this Betty Cantu and why did she write all those documents?" True story.

In recent thrilling episodes we learned all about American exceptionalism. The descendants of the Puritans genuinely believed that God had made them a superior race, entitled, even obliged, to Christianize the world. The 19th century Americans lost their Puritan faith, but somehow managed to retain a belief in their own exceptionalism. American exceptionalism certainly seemed vindicated when, at the end of the Second World War, American armies occupied much of Europe and Asia. Having defeated Hitler and Hirohito, it seemed that America was all that stood between the "free world" and Stalin. At least that's how we saw it. Much of the world agreed. To be modern was to be American. Elvis Presley, blue jeans and big American cars followed in the wake of the troops. The post-war world fell in love with all things American.

The desire to be fully American and to share in that wonderful "modernness" was certainly a big part of my childhood. I remember the admonitions to patriotism regularly doled out by the Irish nuns who taught me to read and write. The flag hung near the cross in every classroom in my grade school.

It was the fifties! Communists were everywhere. To be foreign, to be un-American, was to be dangerous. It was all hula-hoops and plastic covered furniture and modern architecture. My family hadn't spoken German at home since the First World War. And with the election in 1960 of the most exceptional American, John F. Kennedy, we Catholics were finally as American as could be.

Then the council. Twenty-six hundred bishops attended the council, accompanied by their periti. Periti are theological experts, or so it is claimed. I have heard the Second Vatican council called the council of the periti, because at times it seemed that the periti, not the pope nor bishops were running things. Father, later bishop, Anibale Bugnini was one such peritus. Pope Pius XII appointed him Secretary to the Commission for Liturgical Reform, so he was a natural to head the committee for the reform of the Catholic liturgy during and after the Second Vatican Council.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI named Bugnini Secretary of the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy, usually just called "the consilium." Bugnini was certainly a special kind of Catholic priest. I doubt that he would have been at all uncomfortable during the French Enlightenment. Bugnini's secretary, Abbot Boniface Luykx reports that "Bugnini once told Archbishop Malula (Cardinal Archbishop of Kinshasa,Congo) that the norm for the liturgy and for Church renewal is modern Western man, because he is the perfect man, and the final man, and the everlasting man, because he is the perfect and normative man.... adapting to Western culture is the great work in Church liturgical reform and renewal, and in theology, and in all other aspects of Church life... Secularization was, for him, a necessary process, something the Church needed to accept and embrace... He held to the modern philosophical view that man is made without God, and does not need God."

Regarding his plans for the reform of the Mass, he was quoted by the Vatican newspaper, "L'Osservatore Romano," as saying "We must strip... from the Catholic Liturgy everything which can be a shadow of a stumbling block for our separated brethren... the Protestants." So ecumenical were Bugnini and the spirit of the times that six Protestant clerics helped rewrite the Mass of the Catholic liturgy. Enough Catholic theology was removed from the Mass that Brother Max Thurian (one of the six consultants) believed that Protestants could use the text without difficulty. Bugnini reasoned that, if

Protestants said that Mass was not a real sacrifice, then we would just have to agree with that. We should take all the words out of the Rosary that are not from the Bible. Pope Paul responded, in effect, "Are you out of your mind?" The first versions of the reformed Mass were such radical departures from Catholic tradition that they were refused by the pope and the bishops. Words referring to the sacrificial nature of the Mass were reintroduced and the texts were finally published.

Another important conciliar idea: collegiality. Collegiality has always been part of Catholic teaching, but was emphasized by the council. It is the idea that bishops share responsibility for governing the Church with the pope, but always in submission to the papal authority. The idea was not new, but the encouragement of Episcopal conferences was new. (These are national or regional bishops' conferences. They have nothing to do with the Episcopalian Church. At least they aren't meant to.)

A new Mass and collegiality! At the time it felt like the Church was catching up with the times and that the superior American form of government, democracy, had at long last arrived, or even returned to the Church. After all, scholars and liturgists regularly told us that we were simply returning to the practices of the early Church. The council was just scraping off the medieval barnacles that weighed down the bark of Peter. We were going back to the Church as Jesus had planned it, before popes and stuffy rules and boring liturgies. Wait... we've heard this all before! It was called the Reformation!

PS No one should think that I don't like or approve of the Pauline liturgy (the Mass that most of us go to on Sunday). When it is done by the book, it is really very beautiful. It is the silliness of the improvisers that I am trying to explain. The so called "New Mass" is Mass, as is the so called "Old Mass." The Holy Spirit knows what he is doing despite all the loons who say that the current Mass and the present popes are not valid. I believe that in the Second Vatican council, the Holy Spirit anticipated a world that we did not even imagine. Who of us in 1960 could have imagined cell phones and personal computers and E-mail? The problem is not and never was the council. The problem is the vultures who used the "Spirit of Vatican II" as a smoke screen for their own arrogance and sometimes for their own immorality. But what about Bugnini and that crowd? Remember the Biblical principal that God works all things for the good, though we might not understand

that good at the time. As Joseph said to his brothers. "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good, to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Gen 50:20) Pope Benedict seems to be in the process for "reforming the reform." It is the height of arrogance to say, as many aging progressives do, that the Pauline Mass is untouchable. As we look back on both the successes and the failures of the post conciliar era, we need to be honest with ourselves.

Chapter 17

Start The Bubble Machine!

March 3, 2011

We are in the home stretch. Now we begin the rapid descent into liturgical silliness. The Benedictine abbey of Solesmes was destroyed during the French Revolution, only to be re-founded in 1832. There began a movement to restore classical Catholic practices, and to return to the style of worship common the Middle Ages.

Pope Leo XIII specifically asked the Benedictine Order of monks to lead the restoration of the Roman liturgy to its classic form. And why did the liturgy need reform? It had been overwhelmed by pop music. Granted, that pop music was written by the likes of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and that crowd, but it was still pop music and had little to do with the music that had come to us from the temple in Jerusalem and the early Church.

The Masses of the classical and romantic eras became great performance pieces that just happened to be hung on the skimpy skeleton of the Roman Catholic Mass. The Mass itself can take as little as a half hour. The music for Beethoven's Missa Solemnis takes about 80 minutes. I remember the Masses of my youth when father and the congregation would have to sit as the choir sang an interminable Gloria or Credo. It was great music, very entertaining and inspiring but it had little to do with Calvary. Such grand spectacles still pass for traditionalism.

I remember a Mass a few years back that had Mozart's Requiem as its musical

accompaniment, one of the most beautiful and moving pieces of music ever written. I was a bit shocked when a lot of people got up and left the church during the Sanctus. Apparently Mozart died before finishing the whole Mass and others composed the rest using bits and pieces, some written by Mozart, some not. The real Mozart aficionados weren't going to stay for the lesser parts of the Mass, like the Agnus Dei and all that stuff the priest was doing up at the altar, like making the Creator of the universe present in the form of bread and wine. The purpose of the Liturgical Movement of the 19th century was to return the Mass to its simplicity and timeless beauty after a couple centuries of such pious entertainments.

Remember all that American exceptionalism that I have spent the last three months explaining? Now I'd like to talk about a couple of exceptional Americans and their international post-war influence.

Monsignor Frederick Richard McManus was exactly the kind of person who embodied the American Church at its zenith. He was Massachusetts born and bread and attended the Second Vatican Council as an expert (peritus) on the liturgy and member of the council's Liturgy Commission. He wrote large hunks of the Vatican Council document "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" (Sacrosanctum Concilium). He was president of the Liturgical Conference from 195962 and again in 1964-65. He was key in establishing the Federation of Diocesan Commissions in 1968. He was a member of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) for most of its early history. He was brilliant and very influential in steering the Church in the direction he thought it should go. Among his many accomplishments, one affects us today more than any other. He presided at the first large public celebration of Eucharist facing the assembly, not including those said at papal Masses and some smaller experimental Masses. As far as I can tell, this was the first of its kind. It happened at the opening Mass of the 1962 Liturgical Week in Seattle where people had a "...quite unique opportunity to experience aggiornamento (an Italian word meaning "modernization") It was the year of the Worlds Fair, Century 21, and the ubiquitous images of the Space Needle were a constant reminder of the future and what it might hold. The local Church joined wholeheartedly in the events of the exposition... And in August, at the Worlds Fair Arena, the Archdiocese of Seattle hosted a kind of liturgical Century 21: the 23rd annual North American Liturgical Week, a major instrument of liturgical renewal in the United States."

There you have it all: modernity, the space needle, America, the worlds Fair and a non-papal Mass facing the people for the first time in a large, public, official Catholic event, and Boston's own Father McManus doing the honors. The whole thing was seen as a kind of warm up for the Vatican council. "The theme for the week was Thy Kingdom Come: Christian Hope in the Modern World', and the link to the Council was not lost on the Holy Father, who sent his apostolic blessing to all the participants in the Liturgical Week... During the Liturgical Week, the people of Seattle had an opportunity to experience what the liturgy could be like... as a huge assembly gathered on three sides of the temporary altar in the Arena. A lay commentator stood at a lectern in the sanctuary, offering succinct explanations in English! of the various parts of the Mass. The choir was placed close to the altar, not in a far off gallery; and the people joined in the spoken and sung responses and in the singing of hymns. It was a little taste of the future." (refer to "Liturgy Notes", newsletter of the Seattle Cathedral Liturgy Office, article by Corinna Laughlin, Director of Liturgy.) So there you have it. Father, later Monsignor, McManus and his associates had decided that the early Church must have faced the congregation. They were experts, after all.

Rembert Weakland is our next exceptional American. He entered the Benedictines in 1945 and was solemnly professed at Solesmes Abbey in France, where the Liturgical Movement had begun around 1832. He studied music in Europe, Columbia University and the Juilliard School and went on to teach music. In 1964, Pope Paul VI appointed him consultor to the Commission for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. He became abbot primate of the Benedictine order in 1967 and later archbishop of Milwaukee whence he ended his remarkable and distinguished career beginning his retirement in 2002. There is a particular part of his distinguished career that should interest us in our search for the origins of the hootenanny Mass...

Weakland served as President of the Church Music Association of America, and as chairman of its Music Advisory Board, a committee formed in 1965 to assist the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. At its February 1966 meeting, the Music Advisory Board was presented with a proposal for the use of guitars and folk music in the liturgy. I quote a disenchanted former member of the board, Msgr. Richard Schuler, author of the enlightening essay "a Chronicle of the Reform." "It was clear at the meeting that Archabbot Weakland was most anxious to obtain the board's approval.... Vigorous debate considerably altered the original proposal, and a much modified statement about

music for special groups was finally approved by a majority of one, late in the day when many members had already left. This statement on "Music for Special Groups" observed that "different groupings of the faithful respond to different styles of music," and said that in services specifically for high school or college age young people "the choice of music which is meaningful to persons of this age level should be considered valid and purposeful." It specified that such music should not be used at ordinary parish Masses.-"...incongruous melodies and texts, adapted from popular ballads, should be avoided."

Still, that is not quite where the hootenanny Mass got its start. As early as 1964, the National Catholic Reporter ran a story about Sacred Heart, the "hootenanny parish" in Warrensburg, Mo. To paraphrase a Bob Dylan song, "the times, they were peculiar." Things were already getting strange by 1958. In the October, 1958 edition of the Catholic magazine "Jubilee", there appeared an article on John Redmond's recording "The Ten Commandments/the Seven Sacraments" including such inspiring songs as "The Ten Commandments Song", "Extreme Unction" and the ever popular, "Why Do We Tip Our Hats to a Priest?" The article mentions that:

> The Redmond tunes are swingy, simple and syncopated. Musically they parallel current popular idiom, such as catchy love ballads and novelty numbers. On this record Redmond has employed chimes, gurgles and other effects of the wholesome Guy Lombardo/Lawrence Welk school of music, thereby underscoring the baptism of current American swing. An Arthur Godfrey arranger scored the tunes for the recording and Dolly Houston, a vocalist with the late Tommy Dorsey has done a remarkable job of imitating a boy soprano. She is accompanied by girl trio plus a male quartet and an orchestra... a bishop even cried with emotion when he heard the record and ordered song sheets for the children in his schools... originally intended for catechetical use, (the songs) are now spreading into church and are being sung at sacramental services... The diocese of Portland, Maine uses "I'm a Soldier in Christ's Army", a rollicking march that on record appears to begin in samba tempo, as a recessional at Confirmation, and it has been reported that a few churches are singing some of the numbers at Mass.

Guitars or folk music are not mentioned, but the previously quoted "Statement for Special Groups", but with Weakland's help and that of a few others, the statement was taken for official approval of the "hootenanny Mass" later called folk or guitar Masses. And so it was that the hootenanny Mass became the gold standard for all that was modern. Weakland was critical of the decisions of the Vatican Council when he said that "...false liturgical orientation gave birth to what we call the treasury of sacred music and false judgments perpetuated it." His was the proper liturgical orientation and one of his orientations was the guitar Mass. He dismissed the organic tradition of the liturgy and used his considerable influence to make the Catholic Mass unrecognizable, all in the Spirit of Vatican II.

There remains an unanswered question: How is it that in 2011, such Masses are everywhere in the world that there are Catholics? Remember all that interminable discussion of American exceptionalism? You have no idea how popular it was to be American in the 50's, 60's and even the early 70's. I remember being asked by cousins in Germany, "und Richard, gibt es viel Kountry Vestern Musik in Amerika?" (Is there a lot of Country Western Music in America? Even in 1973, when I stayed in a flea-bitten hotel just inside the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem, I was greeted fondly in a questionable restaurant adjoining the run down hotel. I was invited to join a small circle of hookah smoking locals, and in a short while I was in fear for my life. My host began to ask if I thought he could get a visa to the USA. He shouted the he loved the USA and would kill any man who told him that he could not go to the USA, which he loved. I assured him that I thought he could go to the USA. After an hour of assuring him that he was just the kind of person that we were looking for back in the States, I extricated myself, went upstairs, locked my door and itched myself to sleep. But, things American were sure popular for a while.

The American Protestant belief that Mass was not a sacrifice, but an instruction, and the Enlightenment idea that Mass is not a mystery, but a musical, combined with Bugnini's experiments and voila: a sort of Mass that was as modern as modern could be, masquerading as the Mass of the early Church and the Mass of Vatican II. It was peppy, it was entertaining and it was superficial. If Mass must be an entertainment, I suppose I prefer Mozart to Lawrence Welk.

Chapter 18

Into The Abyss: The Era Of Liturgy Committees

March 11, 2011

(Note to the squeamish: I am not making a word of this up. I have fogged the identities of some people. I have no desire to be sued.)

> Do whatever steps you want if
> You have cleared them with the Pontiff
> Everybody say his own Kyrie Eleison
> Doin' the Vatican Rag
>
> Make a cross on your abdomen
> When in Rome do like a Roman
> Ave Maria, gee it's good to see ya
> Gettin' ecstatic an' sorta dramatic an'
> Doin' the Vatican Rag

So go the lyrics of a song recorded in 1965 by the Harvard mathematics professor/comedian, Tom Lehrer. In the preamble to what is an amazingly offensive song by one of my favorite humorists, Professor Lehrer says that the Vatican, "...in an attempt to make the Mass more entertaining, has allowed

more popular music to be used at Mass" or words to that effect. When I say offensive, I really mean it. If you love our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament the song can make you weep. Still, the song sums up a very strange moment in history. I remember about that time, going into a darkened church where a wooden altar had been set up in preparation for the first mass facing the people in our parish. Monsignor O'Brien, a veteran of the old Liturgical Movement, had held off until the last possible moment, but the liturgists had told him that he could postpone things no longer. I remember looking at that flimsy wooden table that now hid the marble altar on which Mass had been said for years and thinking that tomorrow the world would change forever. "Everybody say his own Kyrie Eleison." Being a young man at the time, I was all for change, but as I saw that wooden table, a wave of sadness swept over me. And now that I am an old man, the sadness sweeps back reminding me of all that has been swept away.

All the old rules about liturgical propriety were melting away like gray March snow on a beautiful spring day. Permission could be given to say "home masses." It had been forbidden to say Mass outside an approved place without special permission. Now permission was given at a local level, and when it wasn't given, well who cared? We lived a few doors from a huge Romanesque church, and the young assistant pastor came to our house one night to celebrate the first home Mass in the parish. We "had" Mass sitting around the dining room table. A choir of habited nuns perched on the dining room radiator and the house was filled with neighbors who'd come to experience this wondrous new thing in the life of the Church. We really believed that this was what the early Church must have been like, guitar playing nuns and all. By the way, the nuns' habits were gone within the year, and the nuns themselves were gone a few years after that. I myself was a folk singer at the time, folk singers being defined as anyone who could play three major chords and two minor ones on a guitar and could sing badly enough to sound authentic. I was drafted into playing for the first small group Mass at my high school. We sang those classic Catholic hymns, "Sons of God", "Michael, Row Your Boat Ashore" and "Kumbaya." (I was not sure what Kumbaya really meant. I assumed it was religious, perhaps a form of speaking in tongues.)

From there, the slide downhill continued unabated. Any song that anybody liked now became liturgical music, especially if the words could be adapted. I remember hearing the Jim Morrison tune, "Come on Jesus, Light my Fire" played as an offertory song. And there was that inspiring communion hymn,

"Yummy, Yummy, Yummy, I've got God in my Tummy." And of course almost anything by Bob Dylan was essentially religious. As I went off to the college seminary, such great lyrics as "Today while the blossoms still cling to the vine..." made splendid offertory songs, after all, the song does mention wine. I remember an old seminary professor preaching an extended homily on the lyrics of the Judy Collins song "Clouds," which I believe was the communion hymn that day. We had regular small group masses celebrated with loaves of pita bread and port wine on coffee tables in recreation rooms. Some clergy actually used coffee and doughnuts for Mass, though I myself never participated in a Dunkin' Doughnuts Liturgy. At the first such small group Mass in my dormitory, the music played on a record player by the celebrant was taken from the Beatles "Lonely Hearts Club Band" album. For a while in my first year of college seminary, we would still troop in to chapel for morning prayer, (if we were awake) and evening prayer (if we were still awake). For Lent and Advent, the different dorms would plan the services. I remember one vespers service that consisted entirely of the playing of the musical sound track of the "Wizard of Oz." Lauds and Vespers definitively ended one fateful morning when the morning prayer service was designed around that Christian classic, the movie "Easy Rider." There we sat, a few hundred groggy adolescents recovering form the disciplined academic life of the late sixties seminary in which we had immersed ourselves on the previous evening. From the back of the chapel we heard the revving of a motor, and a liturgical presenter did a wheelie up the main aisle of the chapel. I do not remember another morning or evening prayer being held in the chapel for the rest of my college career.

And thus were trained the pastors, theologians and liturgists of today by the glorious experimentation of the sixties. The competition to make the next liturgy more exciting than the last was huge in my college seminary. Plans were kept hush-hush, lest the competition figure out how to top what we were planning. I remember a great theologian, on loan to us from another diocese. He was furious with me because I had figured out the chords to a Jacques Brel song that his liturgy committee was planning on using. I had, he said, no right to steal a song that they had already stolen, and I was to stop playing it immediately. He went on to be the director of a prestigious pastoral institute, a renowned author on moral theology and the moral consultant to an archbishop, who is long since dead. His career hit a bit of a speed bump when he announced that he was leaving the priesthood

and the Church to marry someone who was very, very interesting. He has since resumed lecturing on moral theology and is a very popular speaker in some Catholic circles. His theories on the near impossibility of committing a mortal sin had a major effect on the thinking of the times and still exercise a great influence in Catholic morality even now.

You cannot imagine how exciting it all was, this return to the spontaneity of the early Church. It was such fun to go to Mass. You never knew what you were going to get. The hootenanny Mass quickly gave way to liturgical dancers, rock bands, clown Masses in which priest and congregation dressed in clown costumes and the liturgical music was invariably taken from the musical "Godspell" along with the Beatles hymn "Fool on the Hill." Some time after I was ordained and I had sobered up from the sixties (which seemed to drag on through the 70's and 80's), I was invited to be the celebrant of a special youth group Mass. I was carefully coached by the liturgist in charge how to time the words of the consecration to fit in with music and the visual images projected on a screen behind me. It was at that point that I had finally had enough. The unbloody re-presentation of Christ's Sacrifice on Calvary had become a joke, just like Tom Lehrer's prophetic 1965 song, "Everybody say his own Kyrie Eleison." Every priest his own pope, every theologian infallible, every opinion valid whether it comes from the bishop of Rome or a rock musician/liturgist. I actually remember my liturgy teacher from seminary say in reference to a papal statement about the liturgy, "Well, that's one man's opinion." My liturgy teacher was certainly an exceptional American. He wasn't about to let some Italian bishop stand in the way of liturgical progress. It seems that Luther got his way and more, Mass is no longer a sacrifice, but a vehicle for the consolation and instruction, and dare I add, the entertainment of the faithful.

Chapter 19

If I Were King Of The Forest. My Life At Our Lady Of The Loons

March 17, 2011

(Another disclaimer: I wish I were making all of this up.)

In 1986, after I had served as a curate in three parishes, I was asked to be the pastor of Our Lady of the Loons, a poor parish in the heart of Frostbite Falls. The parish had a large Asian population as well as Mass in Spanish and Gh'eez, a Coptic liturgical language. The Asians regularly blew off firecrackers in church to scare away the devil. I don't know if the devil was frightened but the Lunar New year was definitely a trial for house pets. The Copts regularly used drums at their Masses and both used umbrellas for processional purposes. It was quite a place. The parish was also famous for the best St. Patrick's Day party in the Frostbite Falls Harbor District. It also had the greatest concentration of the mentally ill and coincidentally, of liberals, in the diocese. It was the diocesan home of Catholics for a Free Choice, a pro-abortion rights group and it had a noon Mass that drew an interesting, and very forward looking crowd. The school children would regularly be dragged down to the lawn of the mayor's house to protest something or other.

Upon arriving there, I was informed that I was not welcome to say the noon Mass. They had their own priest, Fr. Gustave, who did not use the words "Father" or "Lord" when referring to the Divinity. He was a former brain surgeon who lived his religious order vow of poverty admirably, but seemed a

little less clear on his vow of obedience, a likeable fellow who never said much. I was also greeted by the representatives of "el comite," the Spanish-speaking counterpart to the Liturgy Committee which ran the noon Mass, and pretty much everything else in the parish. "El comite" would allow me to say the Spanish Mass, but they took up the collections and made the announcements. There was one other Mass at which the sermon was regularly preached by a former Augustinian seminarian, husband of an ex-nun. God had called him to preach, just not to be ordained. At this point, you may be saying, didn't they appoint you the pastor? Yes. They also gave me a key to the rectory, where I had access to a bedroom and a bathroom and not much else. The rest was public space.

My immediate superior, Monsignor Wuetigarzt, was much enamored of the dynamic young people who ran the Noon Liturgy Committee. Both he and they were very much involved in the movement to free Tibet, hence these heroic young people could do no wrong in his eyes. Politics is the art of the possible, and these days it is fairly easy to remove a pastor, so I did what I could and endured the rest. I had no clout, neither high nor low.

Not long after my arrival at the parish, I got a tearful call from a woman who taught religious education and preparation for First Holy Communion. She asked "Why had we bailed out Diego?" We were always bailing out someone who had been arrested for some heroic anti-government activity. I asked "Who is Diego?" It turns out that Diego was her live-in boyfriend, another religious education teacher. Apparently he had been unfaithful to her and had been arrested for a long list of illegalities. Having been bailed out by the parish, he had robbed her blind, jumped bail and had returned to his home in Tierra del Fuego. I soon discovered that quite a few of our religious instructors didn't worry much about sacramental marriage. To say the least, I was surprised.

I'd had enough. I called a meeting with the "el comite" and announced, "No more special collections that I don't approve, and no more announcements that I don't write and deliver. I remember Anita Comino, the leader of "el comite," fixing her icy gaze on me and saying that "We got rid of one pastor. We can get rid of you." (My predecessor had been driven out of the parish. He had left the active ministry and was resting quietly somewhere.)

That's when the excitement really started. "El comite" doubled as the choir, and every other Spanish speaking parish organization. The choir quit, the

strikes and the protest marches started, and slowly normal Catholics started to return to the parish. The progressive agenda had gotten the congregation at that Mass down to about 75 people. Finally, one Sunday, "el comite" stormed the pulpit at the end of the Mass and started to read a manifesto about my misrule. Having blessed and dismissed the congregation, I left the church and the congregation followed me. The "comite" was left haranguing an empty building.

On to the English-speaking Masses. I often sat in the back at the noon Mass. Remember, I was not allowed to say that Mass. The celebrant was a very creative man. The congregation wrote its own creed. It was really quite nice, except that it left out the resurrection, the divinity of Christ and the Church. In the same progressive spirit, the celebrant made up the Mass prayers. I think he usually had some form of the words of consecration. He always sat in the congregation, and shared the preaching schedule with other men and women, though not with me. He never wore a chasuble, only an alb and stole, and when he made his way to the altar he was always accompanied by lay men and women who stood at the altar, as if concelebrating. It was always very moving. I can still hear the opening words of the liturgy "In the Name of the Fathermother, (one word) son (or daughter) and Spirit" or "In the name of the Creator, savior and sanctifier" and if things Native American were being highlighted, especially at Baptisms, the four winds and the earth mother might be thrown in for good measure. I remember a man who was trying to return to the faith who told me that he had been to the parish three weeks in a row before he realized it was a Catholic church.

One fine Sunday, as I sat in my pew in the back, wondering what would happen next, a young woman took to the pulpit and urged the congregation to go to a march downtown in support of a woman's right to abortion. That was it. The end. The hill I would be happy to die on. Finito, Kaput. Over. When it was just liturgical silliness that my superiors were happy to permit, that was one thing. But when it was something that would result in the violent deaths of the most defenseless among us by murder in the womb, I could take no more. I went to the front of the church as they sang the closing song and said that I wanted to meet with the Noon Liturgy Committee immediately. So began a series of negotiations that ended in open ideological warfare.

At one of the meetings I said that "Perhaps you are right and I am wrong.

Perhaps it is evil to call God "Father". I don't think so and I have a conscience, too. Don't change the words of the sacraments, especially Baptism. People have a right to the sacraments and I have to sign a form that says that this child has been baptized according to the rite of the Roman Catholic Church. You have no right to force me or my successors to agree with YOUR decision of conscience." The following week, a prominent member of the Committee, and a parish employee, had his son baptized in the name of the Fathermother son and spirit, and God knows who else. I said "I have no idea whether or not the baptism was valid, I will have to call the chancery." Here I made my mistake. I called the competent authority, who told me over the phone that the baptism was probably invalid and they would deal with it. They called Fr. Gustave in and told him to desist. They called me to say that they had taken care of the problem. They called me. I should have gotten it in writing. They wrote the parents in question that they would be happy to know that their child had been validly baptized because Fr. Gustave's intention had been to baptize in a Trinity of persons.

The Committee decided like "el comite" before them, that I had to go. A letter writing campaign started and the bishop would regularly send me copies of the letters he got demanding my removal. I would copy them and put them in a binder in the front office for people to read while they waited to see the pastor. The progressive nuns who lived in an apartment across the street would regularly come and steal the binder, and just as regularly I would put out a new one. It was all great fun.

The "inclusivist" community, as they sometimes called themselves, all youngish, Caucasian professionals, demonstrated and protested and wrote letters. I remember one particular event of which they heartily disapproved, a forty hours devotion ending with one all-inclusive, multilingual, parish wide Sunday Mass on Corpus Christi, and a procession of about a thousand people all dressed in their ethnic costumes and carrying their national flags to accompany our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. It was glorious as we marched, banners waving down to the docks and back. The "inclusivists" were furious that I had cancelled "their" Mass in favor of a medieval superstition. During the procession all fifty of them met in the church basement to discuss the direction of the parish. I could have told them the direction of the parish quite easily, it was marching west on Huguenot-Walloon Drive, and the back east again on Merganzer Boulevard. Something had to be done about the pastor! They boycotted the collection. The collection went up. They boycotted the soup

kitchen. The soup kitchen flourished. They came to Mass less often. The congregation grew. My supervisor, Fr. Wuetigarzt, called me in repeatedly. "Why", he would ask, "are you causing me so much trouble???"

Finally the last straw. I had begun to alternate with Fr. Gustave as celebrant of the Mass, provided he would do it by the book. I offered to have him say the other Masses in the parish. He was uninterested. One morning, as I sat in the presider's chair, the choir sang that much loved hymn, "I fall on my knees, to the Maker of Jesus..." (Remember, they had decided that it is morally wrong to call God "Father".) Without thinking, without blinking, I shouted in mid-verse, "Did you just sing Maker of Jesus?' If you'd say the creed now and then you'd know it's begotten, not made'. Now sing it like St. Paul wrote it!!!" They complied, packed up their guitars after the Mass and never came back again. The battle was over. The war goes on.

The attitude that the Mass is ours to do with as we please persists in the Church. It has nothing to do with the Second Vatican Council. It is the fruit of a renewed American Heresy that continues to infest the Church, its seminaries, its universities, its mid-level bureaucracies and many of its parishes. My predecessor at Our Lady of the Loons, no longer in the business of religion, was, and I imagine is, a good man, much more progressive than I. (But then again, who isn't?) They treated him as badly as they treated me, perhaps worse. There is a saying, "If you manage to get rid of your pastor, God punishes you by sending you a worse one." I was the worse one.

Theologically and liturgically, my predecessor was pretty much on the same page as the Liturgy Committee and "El Comite". His only crime was that he was not the pastor who had gone before him. He once had a turkey dinner in the sanctuary on Holy Thursday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper being offered in the midst of the "fixin's". Laity sat around the table as they re-enacted the Last Supper, Pascal Turkey and all. You laugh, or more properly gasp. In 2010, a prominent activist priest in a prominent city who happens to be my fellow alumnus from St. Rhipsima's Theology School at Bathsheba Bible College, did pretty much the same thing. You may have seen the video on You Tube. It was lovely, one of the finest dramatic presentations ever offered to a congregation. Original script, wonderful stage set, breathy intonations, dramatic lighting, liturgical dancers waving diaphanous cloths, stunning. Simply stunning. However, I didn't see same kind of Pascal Turkey at this second extravaganza. It's all lovely. It just isn't Catholic. It isn't

part of a Universal Church. And it has nothing to do with Calvary where the Sacrifice began. It is all Hollywood, all musical, no mystery, and in the long run it is boring, unless, of course, you can top it with something more amusing or outrageous next year. That's show biz!

Chapter 20

Lights, Action, Liturgy!

March 24, 2011

So why is it that we are beset by Pascal Turkeys and stage dramas? St. John the Dwarf wrote in his spiritual classic The Dyspeptikon that "Only those remain in the priesthood who have deep faith in and love for the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, or those who are hoping for a corner office down at diocesan headquarters." Faith and the love of God are not indispensable requirements for employment in the field of religion. Have you ever heard of "church-craft". There are people who are very good at the business of religion. They may be holy, or they may be less than holy. They may be clergy, or they may be laity. It matters not. They are just plain good at the business of religion.

I was alarmed a few weeks ago at a regional meeting of clergy and diocesan office wonks, when a young priest used the phrase "salvation of souls." He said it right out loud! In my 40 plus years of attending such meetings, I had never heard anyone use this phrase. It has always fascinated me that one can meet with dozens, even hundreds of religious workers, ordained and non-ordained, and after the opening prayer, not hear the divinity so much as mentioned until the final prayer.

In my life as a priest I have attended perhaps ten thousand meetings. (Conservatively estimating, that's 37 years in the clerical state, at a rate of 4 meetings a week). At present, I can only remember three or four of those meetings. I have now participated in about four or five programs to revive the

church. I have participated in at least as many fund drives that would solve our financial problems. I cannot count the liturgy meetings, the planning meetings, the meetings to evaluate the meeting to prepare for the meeting that we have not yet had, but will have at some not too distant date. Every meeting seems to generate a new committee, or surface a new need for which a diocesan agency is absolutely necessary. That agency will of course send out important mail and devise new programs to meet the crying need, whatever it may be, and all employees, volunteers and carbon-based life forms walking within twenty yards of a church building will have to attend, lest we be accused of insensitivity to the plight of left handed Bosnians, or whatever oppressed victim is the new cause celebre.

I say this having been a diocesan office wonk myself for at least twenty years. (At least two meetings a week.) I was also a pastor at the time. I decided to collect all the diocesan mail that I received in one month and bring it to a meeting of my department. I staggered in to the main office under an Everest of mail. My colleagues were appalled at the amount of mail we bureaucrats generated. If I remember correctly, someone suggested that an office be opened to deal with the problem and that a mailing be sent out on the subject.

Now things are much better. The mail comes by computer and everyone knows how computers have reduced the junk mail problem. In all those mountains of very important mail; and all those important meetings, I cannot remember a single incidence of anyone seriously asking what God Almighty might think about the situation. That is why, when that young priest said something like "the salvation of souls" he might have as well have made an unfortunate digestive sound.

"Why," you may ask, "have you gone on this rant when you are trying to get to the end of this interminable history?" Simply this. There is no manual of marital technique that can save a loveless marriage, and there is no number of meetings or programs that can substitute for deep and passionate faith. Church-craft is killing the church. She can only be revived by conversion.

Those thousands of meetings I mentioned, for the most part, had all the passion of a lecture on how to repair the Xerox machine. Some people who work in the business of religion love the Lord with all their hearts and souls. Some do not. Zippy, zingy technique cannot save a marriage when love has died. So too, theatrical liturgy cannot replace faith. I am getting old.

People like me who remember the tradition are getting fewer. A few men, who were considered "experts" forced the Church into radical separation from the unbroken continuity of her liturgical history during the twentieth century. I suspect these experts were really good at church-craft.

The Holy Spirit said very clearly in the Vatican Council that the Church must adapt to a changing world. The Council Fathers had no idea just how much the world was about to change. The "experts" were given permission to make a few adjustments. They made more than a few. It was a little like telling your 19-year old child, "Now while we're visiting your great uncle Reinhold down in Boca Vista Palma Bella, you can have a few friends over, but nothing wild and NO beer!" Inevitably you will come to a smoking ruin, a gaping hole where your little cottage with the white picket fence had been, and you will be living in a motel for quite a while.

The generation of juvenile delinquents who burned down the house of the Lord is approaching 70 and 80 now, and they are being replaced by their bureaucratic protgs who never saw what Mass was like before Broadway was baptized. They think tradition is big. It involves glitter and orchestras. If it's in Latin it must be Catholic.

The infection of theatrical liturgy is everywhere. There is no more pious community than the Asian Catholics who made up half of my parish back at Sts. Dismal and Precipitous in the Harbor District of Frostbite Falls. They emigrated to this country at its liturgical low point and all the young clergy and seminarians took courses at Christian Technical Underwriters on the south side of Frostbite Falls. There they learned that stuff from the old country, like rosaries, novenas and quiet Masses had been done away with by the Vatican Council. So they developed grand liturgies with huge choirs that sang hymns set to tango melodies. (I am not making this up). I remember a young Asian man who ran up to me breathlessly as curtain time for Mass approached. He asked me if he should put the microphone up on the "stage." I was about to go into a long disquisition pointing that it was an altar, not a "stage," but I just looked at him and said "Yeah. Go put it up on the stage."

It had in fact ceased to be an altar. It was a stage and there would be no sacrifice, only a kind of community meeting in the midst of a stage performance. We have liturgy offices filled with generations of young church-crafters for whom the Hollywood extravaganza is the only paradigm they

have for liturgy. They have never seen the real thing. Isn't that a little extreme? Hollywood extravaganza? Let me tell you a few stories.

I remember a little old lady who was pretty much as deaf as a stone. She had been away from the church and her daughter, an active Catholic took her to the Easter Mass one year. She was a little surprised when, in the sanctuary she found ducks and bunnies in a kind of Easter display. That wasn't what she remembered as a Catholic. The next year she gave it another shot, and this time they had constructed a rather elaborate display for the Easter Holy Water. It was a sort of babbling brook. They made some of the older parishioners uncomfortable during longer services, but were all the rage for a while. You still see them sometimes. Our stone deaf grandma who didn't see too well either, heard the sound and asked her daughter what it was. Her daughter tried to tell her that it was a babbling brook. To which our heroine responded at the top of her voice, "WHAT? BABOONS? LAST YEAR IT WAS POULTRY! HAVE THESE PEOPLE LOST THEIR MINDS?" Yes, Grandma. They have lost their minds.

Liturgical chic is now cranked out by experts on a regular basis. Priests, deacons and religious are required to pray the liturgy of the hours daily. I remember a liturgical show that passed for vespers at a priests' conference not too long ago. It was beautiful. Pure George Gershwin. "Summertime, and we're gonna have vespers. . . ." One of the most requested funeral hymns these days is that old religious favorite "I did it my way. . . ."

Rev. Neinbaum, my former liturgy teacher encouraged us ". . . try to put a little pizzazz in your sermons, gentlemen." We have had enough liturgical pizzazz to last until the Lord's return. Liturgical improvisation seems to be the order of the day. It is not uncommon to hear a priest preach four or five miniature sermons during a Mass, all in an attempt to improve on the basic product. For example:"This is the Lamb of God, the Lamb sacrificed, the Lamb who loves us, the Lamb who is a gentle and non-violent creature, this little Lamb who is Jesus, who radical separation from the unbroken continuity of loves us, yadda, yadda, yadda. . . .." To which we are expected to respond, "Lord, I am not worthy. . . " At this point one is lost and looking to find his place in the missalette and wondering if he should have brought mint jelly with him.

You are not lost, friend. It is the celebrant who has wandered off. And always with deep emotional feeling and long dramatic pauses. Father, we are

there for Christ, not for you. In particular, I remember the sad funeral of a seminarian. The priest who offered the funeral Mass was a raging thespian and gave it all he had. He held his arms straight out as far as he could, like a man crucified, and beseeched heaven with weeping and long soliloquies. I was tempted to go up, tug on his chasuble and remind him that the guest of honor was in the coffin. I believe he has since left the business of religion to pursue his thespian dreams elsewhere.

I am so tired of hearing people say that they don't get anything out Mass. **You don't go to Mass to get something. You go to give something.** You go to Mass to give your life to Christ who has given His life for you. You offer him your flesh and blood and He in turn gives you His Flesh and Blood. It's called a covenant. St Paul says that we make up in our flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. (Col. 1:24)

What could possibly be lacking in the sufferings of Christ? There is a beautiful old prayer called the Morning Offering:

> O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, and for the salvation of souls.

There are many variations of the prayer, and it usually includes prayer for the intentions of the pope. The important thing is that it unites our joys and sorrows to those of Christ. We join Him as co-redeemers of the world as he asked us to do. (John 14:12-14 "I tell you the truth. The person that believes in me will do the same things I have done. Yes! He will do even greater things than I have done.") That is the meaning of Mass. It is the perfect sacrifice that allows me who am no one, to climb up on the cross with Him for love of the Father and for love of the world that He so loved. We have become so shallow that we think Mass is an entertainment designed to cure our boredom for a little while, forgetting that it is the un-bloody re-presentation of Calvary's sacrifice.

One more story. A new bishop came to the diocese and there was a grand Mass to welcome him. There were two, count them, two choirs, one in front and one in back. Afterwards, the overheated cathedral choir director asked me if I thought the new bishop liked it. I said, "I'm sure he was very

pleased. I hope God enjoyed it as much as the bishop did." Church-craft. We are killing the Church with church-craft, but at least we do not lack for entertainment on the way down.

Chapter 21

It's Me, O Lord, Standing In The Need Of Prayer

April 1, 2011

You have doubtlessly heard the saying that growing old is not for the timid. As I plunge into senescence (old age-hood) I can never remember whom I've told what. I'm sure you have heard me tell this story. One Sunday, many years ago, when I was still young and the Tridentine Mass was a rare thing, I felt much in the need of prayer. I had heard there was a Tridentine High Mass downtown and I thought that was just what I needed, the Mass of my youth with a glorious choir and clouds of incense. So, having finished my last Sunday Mass at 12:15, and driving in my accustomed manner (bat out of somewhere not good), I arrived 10 minutes late for the 12:30 PM Solemn High Mass at the Basilica of St. Antica. It was not High, nor was it Solemn! Some old fossil was mumbling into a wall in a language I could have understood, had I been able to hear him! No choirs, no incense, no stirring sermon. Just a quick Mass on a hot afternoon.

I said to the Lord, "I am not having a very good experience of prayer, here, don't ya know!"

And the little inner voice that is sometimes the Holy Spirit said, "Oh, you came for an experience? I thought you came to worship Me."

Touch! At which point, I started to worship, at which point I had an experience. I realized that the old priest at the altar was not responsible for my

experience, and that I, as a congregant, was not required to have an experience. I was there to bow before the Lord and to offer Him my life. Those 20 minutes changed my life.

Some "liturgists" or "celebrants" or "presiders" or whatever we are calling them this month, think that their job is to provide an experience. Asked, they would deny this, but it is nonetheless true. We roll our eyes and sneer at "bad liturgy." What, pray tell, is bad liturgy? Is it a Mass lacking the latest fashion, be it liturgical dance, or incense in Mexican bean pots? A Mass, perhaps, at which the music is poorly performed, or the lighting is off or the acoustics are bad? Is it a bad liturgy in which the celebrant is cross-eyed, or has a distracting mannerism and does not harmonize with the edifice? I remember a blushing bride who refused to allow a Vietnamese priest to celebrate her wedding Mass. She thought his heavy accent would ruin the wedding video. It mattered not that he was a living saint who had suffered in a concentration camp for his faith. It would have been bad liturgy. She was not interested in a Sacrament. She was interested in an inspiring photo-op.

God ceased to be worshiped when Luther decided that Mass is not a sacrifice, and taught that it was only a consolation and instruction. Instruction and consolation quickly become entertainment. The goal of the presider then becomes to create an experience. For us moderns, only experience is real. It's only real if I feel it, thus the most important thing I can do at church is to feel something, and the most important thing I can do as a pastor is to help my parishioners to "really feel it." The great irony is that my attempt to create an experience militates against authentic experience. It is something manufactured. It is a poison that blocks and excludes nourishment. That's how poison works. It takes the place of something the organism needs. Carbon monoxide substitutes for oxygen. When the real thing comes along, the body rejects it because the need has been filled. The body suffocates without ever feeling short of breath.

To be human is to worship. The ability to worship more than anything else sets us apart form all other beings. To know how small we are and that an infinite Creator loves us and made us for Himself. To worship is to bow down, to prostrate oneself in both Greek and Hebrew (shachah and proskynein respectively). Why bow down? To bow down, to prostrate oneself makes one absolutely vulnerable. The police know this. "Get out of the car, lie flat on the ground and put your hands where can I see them." (That is

not worship per se, because at that moment I doubt that the officer loves us, no matter how friendly he or she may be.) That is what's behind all the folding and raising of hands, kneeling, genuflecting etc. It is about smallness and vulnerability.

Luther exchanged the congregant for God as the object of worship when he taught that Mass is not a sacrifice. Worship became entertainment, and exceptional Americans, who kneel to no one, took up the idea with enthusiasm and have foisted it on the whole world. Where worship ends, humanity dies, and we see a culture dying.

I have no objection to Mass facing the people, it's just that it only works for a very holy priest and a very holy congregation. It is so tempting to play to the audience when being stared at by a thousand eyes. Most priests reading this must be insulted that I even imply that this might be true of them.

"But , Father, (and I include myself) if it is true that your religion is what you do when no one else is looking, is your celebration of the Mass an act of faith, or just an act? You may think that all your emoting is aimed at the Lord, but is that the way you say Mass when you are all by yourself, if you bother to say Mass when you are all by yourself?"

Mass facing the congregation, as I said is just fine for a very holy priest. It is also a swell place for a raging narcissist. (Though I have met some narcissists who do just fine with the glitz and glitter of the old Mass). Let us remember that the word hypocrite is just the common Greek word for stage actor. I suppose that my whole theme can be summed up simply. Stop the show and return to the sacrifice.

"So, Rev. Know it all, what would you do to make everything alright?"

That will have to wait for next week.

Chapter 22

Old King Log

April 8, 2011

"Let all the poisons that lurk in the mud hatch out."

The frogs were tired of their government. It was too old-fashioned, and so the cranes suggested they nominate a large log in the middle of the swamp to be their king. They would dress the log in royal robes so it could entertain them with the pomp and display of royalty and rule them in a way that made no demands.

Until now, the frogs had hidden themselves among the reeds and grasses, but now they had a new and more open government. How tame and peaceable Old King Log was! In a short time, the younger frogs were using him for a diving platform, while the older frogs made him a meeting place, where they complained loudly about improvements the government should be making. The cranes had suggested such a king in the first place, and when the frogs had forgotten how to hide, the cranes gobbled up the poor frogs right and left. And the frogs soon saw what fools they had been.

A frog about to be devoured, wept and pleaded with the cranes, reminding them that they had been the proponents of this new government. To which the cranes responded, "You have what you asked for and so you have only yourselves to blame for your

> misfortunes." And so the few frogs who still knew where to hide understood all the dangers that lurked in the swamp, even those dangers which seemed pleasant at the time, and they were better and wiser for the lesson. "Let all the poisons that lurk in the mud hatch out!"

"Did you really mean what you wrote about motorcycles and pro-choice marches? How could you let things like that go on in your parish, Father, and still worse, how could the bishops and the pope let such things go on?"

You are not asking the right question. Better you should ask, "How could Almighty God let such things go if the Church is indeed His Church?"

There are two schools of thought at the present who say that God does not recognize the church whose pope is Benedict XVI, whose popes Pius XII and Blessed John XXIII and Venerable John Paul II also were. There are rebels on the right and rebels on the left. On one side, there are those who ordain women and on the other, those who ordain bishops both in defiance of the bishop of Rome. On one side, there are those who think the Church of Rome is outdated and, on the other side, those who think her throne is occupied by anti-popes. Some think the Second Vatican Council and its liturgy are heretical and some think that all councils before Vatican II have been superseded.

Both factions are, at heart, the same. They are rebels who have turned their backs on the Bride of Christ. They are both motivated by the same spirit though they come to seemingly different conclusions. "For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you!" (1 Samuel 15:23.)

The radical traditionalist faction rejects the Second Vatican Council. They claim that the "new" Mass is, at best, corrupt, at worst, invalid. They somehow believe that the Holy Spirit has abandoned most of the members of the Church. The most radical among them are called "sede vacante" or "sedevacantists" (from Latin for "empty seat" referring to the teaching chair of St. Peter.) They claim to be the true Catholics, but are anything but Catholic in its fullest sense of "universal"." They are a tiny faction who seem to think that the Holy Spirit has no power to protect the larger Church. They claim that the last valid pope was Pius XII. John the 23rd was invalidly elected, as have been all popes since.

Their reminiscences about the 1950's and the reign of Pius XII are flawed. They forget that the Liturgical renewal they so detest and the Biblical renewal were sponsored by Pius XII. The madness of the sixties and seventies were the fruit of the forties and fifties. The Church of the fifties, as I remember it, was "at the top of its game." Soon after the Second World War, convents and seminaries were full to overflowing. The good pastor was defined by his skills as an administrator. We suffered from something called the "edifice complex." The good pastor built new schools and new convents and churches and filled them with eager young candidates. The pressure to join the religious life was intense. If an eighth grade boy was in trouble with his teacher, all he had to say was, "Next year I'm going to enroll in the seminary high school." Of the 50 plus boys in my eighth grade class, fully half went to the seminary. One was ordained.

When a boy got to the seminary, the pressure was really on. We didn't live on campus. We went home at night like regular high school students, but regular stopped there. We were in school on Saturday and had Thursdays free. We were told this was the custom in Europe, but it was designed to "protect our vocation." It was the duty of every parishioner to tell Monsignor at the rectory if they saw one of the seminarians in long conversation with a girl. Remember, these were 14 and 15 year-old boys! Leaving the seminary was a Herculean task. If one wanted to leave, it was necessary to have all your teachers sign a "pink slip" in order to have your credits transferred to another school. Each teacher gave you "the talk."

"You would make such a fine priest! Why don't you give it one more year?"

After facing three or four teachers, you gave up, threw the pink slip in the trash and told your girlfriend that you were going to stay in the seminary one more year, and no, you couldn't take her to the junior prom. Maybe next year for the senior prom.

The pressure from outside was just as great. It was the dream of every pious mother on the south side of Frostbite Falls that, had she three sons, one would be the alderman, one would be the police or fire chief, and the gem in the crown, one would be Monsignor at St. Turalura's down the street. Everyone was pulling for you. I remember a seminarian whose next door neighbor, a young girl, prayed two Rosaries a day for him, that he persevere in his vocation. When finally in the graduate school, he got up enough nerve to leave the seminary, the girl next door had a nervous breakdown. I remember

going to the theology school on the monthly "visiting day" to see an older relative a few years ahead of me in seminary. He stood in his cassock at the door of the residence waiting for us. He had lost about 30 pounds and one eye was twitching. He told me later that he paced on the eve of his ordination wondering how he could get out of it. He had been an exemplary seminarian and did not long remain a priest.

At the same time, there was pressure from the inside in the opposite direction. It was hard to leave, but it was easy to be thrown out. There was strict demerit system and we all dreaded the words "Give me your demerit card." It was always said with an icy tone of dispassionate justice. Something like Darth Vader, but more matter-of-fact. Then there were the academic demands. Every year, the bottom ten percent was routinely thrown out for grades, at least in the seminary I attended. If one had an obvious physical deformity there was simply no way to be welcome in our seminary. Let him go to a religious order. Perhaps they would take him In this incredible tug of was for what were essentially the souls of teenagers, the question was rarely asked, and then only by the pious few among the faculty, "Does this young man have a sincere calling from the Lord?" Some real saints were turned away from the seminary I attended. Some real (word deleted) excelled.

Then one day it all changed. There was going to be a council. It was like that scene in the "Wizard of Oz" when Dorothy inadvertently throws a bucket of water on the Wicked Witch of the West and all her evil guards suddenly fall to their knees in thanksgiving for their freedom. Ding Dong the witch is dead! Catholicism was going to be fun! We would make up the rules as we went along. The same frightening disciplinarians suddenly became flower children. I remember a bunch of these old guys one year were dressed in cassocks and scowls and the next year they returned from a summer retreat sensitivity center at Big Sur, California wearing love beads and turtleneck sweaters. (I am not making any of this up.) A few of them started dating because the rule about celibacy was about to change. An older friend of mine went ahead with his ordination because he had been told by his teachers that celibacy would soon be abolished. One heard stories of some of the guys going on dates on the eve of their ordination.

Those in charge were not always different people. These were the same rigid disciplinarians that had controlled the seminary system and they were strangely rigid about change. The "new" became as rigorously enforced as

the old had been. Young men were actually thrown out of the seminary for being "too pious." My point is not that a new group had taken over the system. It was the same old crew. The pressure was off. The explosion was inevitable. The "spirit" of Vatican Two made everything acceptable for a little while, that is until the cranes started to devour the frogs. The attitude that makes the Gospel and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass a personal plaything did not spring into life full grown, like Athena from the brow of Zeus. It was there all the time.

Chapter 23

Old King Log, continued: "Let all the poisons that lurk in the mud hatch out."

April 15, 2011

There are two dimensions of church craft I think caused real trouble. First, remember in the Church of the 40's and 50's, there was a strange kind of legalism that asked how little was necessary rather than how much was possible. I remember great discussions of how far one could go before something was a sin. We think of corruption as something obvious. It is really very subtle. A whole branch of church craft seemed dedicated to helping people see their way past the rules.

The best of these theological church crafters did their finest work helping people to think their way around the Church's prohibition of artificial birth control. Their disregard for the teaching authority of the Popes thus infected the world! There were saints and sinners, but worst of all you could be a very lukewarm church crafter. "So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:16)

In the beginning of the sixties the great spitting out began. People left the convents and rectories by the busload. Many of the priests who prepared me for the priesthood left the priesthood even as they were teaching me. I remember the dean of our college gathering us all in the assembly hall to

encourage us to get our teaching certificates. That way we would have a trade when the Catholic Church went belly up. There was, as I have pointed out, a great pressure to be a priest or nun. I suspect that a lot of people entered the religious life who would rather not have done so.

When Blessed Pope John XXIII opened up the windows, to use his phrase, a whole lot of people jumped out, and many of them got jobs working in the bureaucracy of religion, in the career field of, you guessed it, church craft. Some few remain in those positions today and they with their followers continue the deconstruction of Catholicism, making sure that hymn lyrics are politically correct and that programs are in place to eradicate the problems of the 50's and 60's. The theme song of the church crafters is "Sing a new church into being. . . .male and female in God's image, male and female, God's delight." I get tired just thinking about it.

The second, I have already called the "edifice complex." As I have pointed out, in the 40' and 50's and perhaps earlier, certainly later, the good administrator was promoted. When an American pastor in the middle of the twentieth century talked about conversion he usually meant switching the boiler over from oil to natural gas. When first ordained I worked with a kind and holy priest who was denounced by his peers for allowing the Spanish charismatic groups to use his church. His accusers were progressives who hated the movement because they saw it as reactionary. Too much prayer. Not enough social justice. In the petition they sent to the bishop, the most damning charge was that he had let the buildings get run down!!!

Some bishops felt much more comfortable in a discussion with accountants and heating contractors than they did with theologians. One of the finest and kindest bishops I ever knew, who is now long dead, actually once said in response to a religious question, "Don't ask me. I'm not much of a theologian." This is certainly not true of all the bishops, but I suspect it was true of some. They were made to feel inadequate to the task by experts who were only too glad to tell them what to think and sweeping changes were made because, "Well, this is what the experts are telling us." This is evident in the architecture of the time.

Experts decided that churches be trashed, and Communion rails were ripped out and Formica replaced marble. I know a contractor who told me once that his family had prospered first by pulling all the old stuff out, and then putting it all back in. They just had to wait until the next wave of experts weighed

in. The bishops who had been so good with brick and mortar were made to feel absolutely unsure about the tradition of the Church. When they went to the council, they brought their "periti," their theological experts with them and the council was thus called the council of the periti who after a couple martinis were happy to sing a new church into being. "His (Jesus') disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him, and He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down." (Matt.24:1-2) Or, in other words, "Let all the poisons that lurk in the mud hatch out."

Chapter 24

The Day the Music Died

April 21, 2011

This morning I was at the gym going about in circles like a mind-numbed hamster, (Yes, the Rev. Know-it-all goes to the gym, even in his advanced age. When I was young we practiced harsh penances for the sake of eternal life. Now we go to the gym and submit ourselves to instruments of torture so that we won't look so much like beached whales while sunning ourselves at the seaside. How culture has advanced!) As I plodded along past the television sets arranged so as to distract the penitents on the treadmills, I saw a news show featuring a perky bunch of dancers dressed as nuns singing invigorating Gospel Music. (Ice Road Truckers on the History Channel and Perky Make-Believe Nuns singing and dancing on the morning news. Sometimes the collapse of the civilization exceeds one's power to comment.)

It all brought me back to the heady 60's when the spirit was a blowin' all over this land. In the 1940's, Catholicism was the darling of Hollywood, that fountain head of American culture. Going My Way was a 1944 film, a light-hearted musical comedy about a young priest replacing an old curmudgeon pastor Fr. Bing Crosby, living the typical life and sings constantly. Next year, Fr. Crosby in the sequel, The Bells of St. Mary's is still singing and raising funds as he argues with Sister Ingrid Bergman as they both save a struggling school. The Bells of St. Mary's was the highest-grossing picture of 1944. After a slew of Bible movies, 1959 gave us the Sound of Music, a musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein with more singing religious, nuns this

time.

Then in 1963 there was Lilies of the Field in which Sidney Poitier teaches German nuns to be more open minded. And also how to sing more modern music. Then things take an ominous turn. Change of Habit is a 1969 movie in which Dr. Elvis Presley falls in love with Sister Mary Tyler Moore while working in the inner city. Then we move on to the TV show, The Flying Nun, a sitcom placed in Puerto Rico in which Sister Sally Fields learns to fly using her traditional Ursuline habit. This disaster ran for three seasons beginning in 1967.

By 1992 we have Sister Act a film in which Sr. Whoopi Goldberg teaches nuns how to sing more relevant music. The Pope visits them, loves the music and the nuns begin recording careers. Hollywood Catholicism is at best a musical comedy, a kind of harmless joke. At worst it is a sinister cult as portrayed by movies like, Agnes of God about nuns killing babies, Elizabeth and its sequel, The DaVinci Code and the recent Showtime series The Borgias, among many more.

Nuns however, when they aren't being sinister, sing gospel music which brings us back to the Perky Nun Singers who took me back fifty years to another television show and another perky nun, the original singing nun, Soeur Sourire (Sister Smile) when she appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show on January 5, 1964 with her smash hit song, "Dominique". We knew her as the singing nun.

Jeanne-Paule Marie Deckers was born in 1933 in Belgium and joined a Dominican convent in 1959. She wrote songs and played the guitar at retreats for young girls and finally recorded an album, available for sale in the convent gift shop. In 1963, the single "Dominique" became an international hit. In 1967, Deckers left the convent and hit the road as Luc Dominique. In 1967, she recorded "Glory Be to God for the Golden Pill," a joyous song of thanksgiving for artificial birth control. It was a flop and her career nosedived, despite the 1966 movie "The Singing Nun" starring Debbie Reynolds. Deckers called the film "fiction."

Deckers opened a school for autistic children in Belgium. In 1975 Soeur Sourire moved in with Anna Pecher, her companion for the next ten years. In the late 70's, the Belgian government claimed that she owed $63,000 in back taxes for the royalties on her one hit song. Unable to meet her finan-

cial obligations, she and Pcher committed suicide together by an overdose of barbiturates and alcohol on March 29, 1985. She was 51. Her sad life somehow sums up the disaster that was the optimistic Catholicism lite of the 60's. A happy progressive Catholicism that cast off what it believed to be the shackles of the past only to find itself devoid of any depth, like a seed sown on rocky ground that the birds came and devoured. Jesus said:

> Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." (Matthew 7:24-27)

We tried to exchange the rock of Peter which is the rock of Calvary, the SACRIFICE of the Mass for something more pleasant, more in keeping with the times. The attempt has failed utterly.

The Second Vatican Council has not failed. It has not been fully implemented. The rebellion that used the Council as its cover has failed. Jesus said:

> The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared".(Matthew 13:24-50)

These were not just any weeds. These were "zizania" or lolium temulentum, to use its scientific name. It makes one feel drunk at first, but can cause death. Another name for it is "false wheat," because until it is full grown it is indistinguishable from wheat. The meaning of the parable of the weeds and the wheat is that certain things mimic food, but are poison. What passed for liberation in the 60's turned out to be a kind of toxic drunkenness. It

certainly killed Souer Sourire and I suspect that it killed the souls of many, many more. Perhaps it is time to quit insisting that the weeds are perfectly edible and to return to pure wheat, the Bread that came down from heaven.

SO, REV. KNOW IT ALL, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

Chapter 25

Continued. . .

April 29, 2011

I have always enjoyed the song that says "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got till it's gone. They paved paradise and put in a parking lot." The Scriptures say it differently: "Do not move your neighbor's boundary stone set up by your predecessors in the inheritance you receive in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess." (Deuteronomy 19:14) Holy Writ goes on to say it five more times: Deuteronomy 27:17, Job 24:2, Proverbs 15:25, Proverbs 22:28 and Hosea 5:10.

When the Bible forbids the same thing six times, it's probably because God wants us to get the point. You shouldn't move a boundary stone because you can never get it back in exactly the same spot. It's there for a reason. Oh, but that's not true anymore. You could do it with global positioning satellites! Don't be an idiot! Haven't you ever gotten totally lost in some construction zone because your GPS lied to you? That's exactly the attitude that got us into this mess in the first place.

There is another song from the sixties, "This is the dawning of the age of Aquarius." We actually believed that lunacy. We somehow thought we were smarter, better, wiser and more fully human than our parents. Something had happened in the stars and we were the generation that would end war, poverty, hunger and save the whales. Mine is the generation that gave you the drug wars, new and more horrible sexually transmitted diseases, new wars of religion, universal divorce, fatherless children, spiraling gas prices,

spiraling environmental degradation and Jerry Springer.

We also gave you a dying Western culture and, in the field of religion, we provided feel good mega-churches and a much diminished quickly graying Euro/American version of modern Catholicism. It is a wonder that aging hippies like myself occupy senior teaching positions like snarling guard dogs and force the failures of the 60s on the children of today. They must never have read that Bible verse, "O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers." (1Kings 19:4)

Here is another worthy quote from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Paragraph 365: The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the "form" of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.

CS Lewis says it much more simply in The Screwtape Letters. He points out that we are not spirits trapped in flesh; we are incarnate spirits. What we do with our bodies we do with our souls. That is the reason for all the kneeling and standing, for bread and wine and oil and water and candles and incense and vestments and wood and gold and stone. We are incarnate spirits. We speak the language of matter because that is how God made us.

Many of my teachers left the priesthood for which they presumed to prepare me. One of those who left to marry a wealthy divorcee opposed my entering holy orders on the grounds that I was too "proclamational" and not "incarnational" enough. In other words, I talked about Jesus too much. Now that I am old I have realized that he and his friends were not incarnational at all.

The glass chalices that looked like tasteful Salvador Dali abstractions, the trimmed down liturgy, the de-mystification of ceremonies, the anti-clerical clerics who refused to wear vestments, the breaking of the stained glass, the wooden tables that replaced the marble altars, the removal of the tabernacles, the coffee table Masses that tried to consecrate donuts, these were all attempts to make the faith more reasonable.

Enough of the dark and mysterious churches, the mumbled rosaries, the plaintiff novenas, haunting chants and sentimental hymns. We would be reasonable; we would be spiritual; we would be modern! They thought they

were embracing the fullness of human nature, but they were in fact rejecting it because they failed to understand the unbreakable connection between body and soul, even as their bodies ran rampant and their souls withered. They thought they were above the moral restraints of a darker age and could dispense themselves from old restrictions.

Part of the great de-mystification was the removal of the confessional screens. People said the dark confessional box was too frightening, particularly for children. I remember what an old priest said when they took out the confessionals for more compassionate and comfortable "face to face confession rooms." He remarked that "It won't be long before they realize why they put in the confessional screens in the first place." Do not remove an ancestors' boundary stone.

So what should those of us who are left to do? Simple. Obey the Vatican Council. The Second Vatican Council said nothing requiring the use of popular music at Mass, about removing altars and altar rails, about removing icons and images, about standing for communion. Nothing was ever mentioned about the face to face confessions or face to face Masses. Fasting was never forbidden, rosaries and novenas and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament were never suppressed. Chalice veils and maniples and beautiful vestments were never abolished. Study the documents. Put back the boundary stones. They were there for a reason.

Here's an example: The thinkers of the sixties, who were about as deep as a puddle, decided to take out the communion rails. "Nothing should divide us from the Lord," they said. "Communion rails emphasized clerical privilege and made God separate and forbidding. We should gather around the altar holding hands, singing Kumbaya. That would express the great truth that we are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord."

Did it never occur to these yahoos, that it was a communion rail? Communion: a coming together. Humanity IS separated from God by sin. The point of the Gospel is that Christ breaks down the barrier between God and man. To take out the communion rail is to say there is no barrier. It is like one spouse saying "There is no problem in our marriage" while watching the other spouse packing a suitcase.

The symbolism that the communion rail expresses is that "God so loved the world." It is the place where God comes to meet us. He comes to us. We

go to Him. With our bodies and our souls, we acknowledge that truth by kneeling at a communion rail. We wait for the Lord and the Lord comes to place Himself in our keeping. With our bodies and our souls, we acknowledge the great truth of grace, that we cannot achieve heaven unless God gives it to us.

The experts of the age of plastic committed the sin of the tower of Babel, "Let us build a tower that reaches to the heavens." Chaos ensued then and chaos ensues now. The great lights of the sixties believed that removing the communion rails would bring us closer to the Lord. I think it has had the opposite effect. One stands in a line, shuffling slowly, eyes focused on the back of someone's head waiting for him to move. The celebrant says "Body of Christ" but more often than not, is thinking "next..." There is rarely a sense of waiting on the Lord, there is no sense of a gift lovingly given and humbly received. There is just, "next...."

Around 400 AD, a theologian named Pelagius taught that moral perfection, and thus salvation, could be attained by human effort and action without God's grace. The removal of the communion rails is the Pelagian heresy in stone, or a lack there of. It is sad to see little children grabbing the Communion host and running back to their pews with it. They are clueless as to the beauty and grandeur of the gift.

At a funeral, a few weeks ago a young woman came to communion and, when I said "Body of Christ", took the host, looked at it and started to walk away, I caught up to her and asked her if she had made her first communion. She looked a little surprised and said, "No, of course not! I'm Jewish."

I don't fault the poor, embarrassed young woman. I fault us. We have been making up the rules for forty plus years now and communion just didn't seem very special anymore. People are living in common law marriages, or second or third civil marriages and they come to communion. They haven't spent a moment preparing, or haven't been to confession in ten years, but they come to communion.

I remember finding (FAMILY COLUMN ALERT) a latex protective device still in its wrapper while I was cleaning the church after midnight Mass one year. I imagine it had been lost by some hopeful young fellow who had accompanied his beloved to midnight Mass. I imagine they both went to Holy Communion. I also imagine that he was disappointed when he realized

that he couldn't celebrate the birth of our Savior in the manner that he had been planning.

If that young Jewish woman previously mentioned had seen people kneeling quietly and waiting for something, she might have thought twice about getting in line. She might even have been intrigued. But what she saw was bunch of people standing in line to get something and she thought she might as well do the same. What is it but a little round matzoh looking thing? If this were an isolated instance I wouldn't even mention it, but I have had repeated incidents of having to retrieve the host from someone who threw it on the ground or stuck it in a pocket. So get in line, and grab heaven! Even Pelagius would be horrified! Put back the boundary stones. They were there for a reason.

Chapter 26

Continued. . .

May 6, 2011

As I told you the last time you were foolish enough to read up this column, the solution to the current liturgical mess is to implement the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The reforms mentioned nothing, as far as I can tell about moving the tabernacles, whitewashing the churches, breaking the images and stained glass, ending novenas, rosary devotions and benedictions of the Blessed Sacrament. And amazingly enough, the second Vatican Council did not mandate the turning of the altars. There is no requirement in the general liturgical norms of the Church that the congregation be forced to stare at their pastor's ugly mug for the entire liturgy, nor he at theirs. My dear friend, the Rev. Colonel O'Leary, deacon and research monkey extraordinaire, has been spending a little time studying the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal which is to be implemented in the coming Advent. He has been comparing the new Missal to the current Missal particularly those rubrics which address the orientation of the priest to the people.

Amazingly, both documents assume that the priest is facing in the same direction as the people for much of the Mass! The current Missal seems to allow for the priest to face the altar for the sign of the cross and then turn toward the people for the greeting, while the revised Missal seems to envision that both the sign of the cross and the greeting be done facing the people. The Penitential Rite, Opening Prayer and Profession of Faith give no indication as to orientation. Specific instructions to face the people are

given at the offertory for the prayer "Pray Brethren" (Orate Fratres) in both Missals. The Eucharistic prayer indicates the consecrated body and blood of Christ are to be "shown" to the people but does not seem to require facing the people while doing so. The elevation at the doxology omits any reference to the "showing" of the host or chalice. No indication of orientation is given for the Pater Noster, however the revised Missal instructs the priest to face the people for the greeting of peace. Specific instructions to face the people are given for both the Lamb of God, the prayer "Lord, I am not worthy" and the closing prayer.

If the Missal tells Father to turn around and face the people it is clearly assuming that he is not facing the people at other times. Such instructions would be unnecessary were the priest already facing the people. The basic assumption seems to be that when the priest is addressing the Lord, he faces in the same direction as the congregation, in solidarity with them, praying together. However, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal indicates in paragraph 299 that

> The altar should be built apart from the wall, in such a way that it is possible to walk around it easily and that Mass can be celebrated at it facing the people, which is desirable wherever possible.

There is ambiguity in this instruction as to whether it is the free standing nature of the altar or the facing of the people that is "desirable." Let us look at the original Latin Text of paragraph 299 of the General Instruction. That should muddy the waters nicely.

> *Altare exstruatur a pariete seiunctum, ut facile circumiri et in eo celebratio versus populum paragi possit quod EXPEDIT ubicumque possibile sit.* (Pay attention! There may be a brief quiz.)

As anyone who has taken beginning Latin knows, translating Latin into modern English is really just a sort of educated guess. Latin has no "the" or "a", there is really no word for "yes" and so on. Word order is different than in English and the sentences go on and on like this brief history. One ends up sounding like the Star Wars nebbish, Yoda (played by Fozzy Bear of

the Muppets). Here is my literal translation, "May altar be built from wall apart, so that it may be easy to be gone around and in it celebration facing (the) people to be done which helps (or makes available) wherever it may be possible."

You figure it out. It sure doesn't say you gotta do it this way. The word desirable doesn't seem to appear. At least I wouldn't translate "expedit" as "desirable." Its usual meaning is "untangle", "prepare", "make free" or "available. " All those "maybes" leave a lot of room for flexibility. "Expedit" would more commonly be translated "useful" or "available" rather than "desirable", in translation. In either case, it is plainly evident that a posture versus populum, or facing the people, is not mandated.

The text seems be saying that the possibility of Mass facing the people should be available. But if that's not possible, that's okay too. To be possible, is not the same as to be required. The council did an amazing thing. It mandated flexibility, that rarest of virtues. I am reminded of the old joke: "What's the difference between a liturgist and a terrorist? You can't negotiate with a liturgist." (For the humor impaired: insert laughter here.)

It is a great wonder that the inflexibility of times past is now a mark of the progressive movement in the church. When someone wants to kneel for communion, or doesn't want to hold hands at the Our Father, or, heaven forfend, wants to receive Holy Communion on the tongue rather than in the hand, that person is reprimanded and there is much pious talk about unity of gesture and division in the congregation and yadda, yadda, yadda.

It takes an old curmudgeon like me to remind the young church crafters that uniformity is not necessarily unity. Let people do different things if they are legal and moral. The "my way or the highway" approach to worship that is common among so many self-styled progressives is one more reminder that no one is so conservative as a liberal. Father may improvise as much as he pleases. God have mercy on you however if you want to kneel at the wrong time. Let us take the sage advice of Chairman Mao and "Llet a thousand flowers bloom."

So, it seems that the liturgists have been pulling your leg. Most of what passes for Vatican Two is really off-off-off Broadway planned by frustrated actors. I have said Mass the way the Council Fathers envisioned, except that I used mostly English. It was very beautiful and very reverent and I have

the feeling that had we obeyed the Council, we would not have emptied the churches. By the way, the Council Fathers insisted that Mass be mostly be in Latin. That canoe has been over the waterfall for some time now. I have seen people storm out of church if they hear so much as a "Dominus vobiscum."

For some reason not even known to heaven, these same people gush with inclusive joy when the prayers of the faithful are offered in eight different languages. Recently I was at a Mass during which one of the prayers of the faithful was offered in Hebrew. I'm sure all the orthodox Jews at the service were pleased. Kurt Vonnegut in his book "Cat's Cradle" invents the word "duffle." A duffle is the situation in which the lives of thousands are in the hands of a few fog bound children. What we have here is a duffle, even though most of the children in control are pretty old by now.

Chapter 27

The Captain Has Turned On The Fasten Seat Belt Sign And Requests That You Put Your Trays And Seats In The Upright Position In Preparation For Landing.

May 13, 2011

So what do we do now? First a word to the Catholicism-lite crowd—be who you claim to be. Tolerate diversity. If there's a group who wants to have Mass by the book, do a Mass for them without eight mini-sermons, liturgical dancers, incense in bean pots and lay concelebrants holding hands while singing Kumbaya. Have a Mass that allows the old fogies and the young fogies (to borrow Fr. Andrew Greeley's phrase) to kneel for communion if they want, or to say the Our Father without holding the sweaty hand of some stranger. Have a Mass that's guaranteed to be "by the book."

The incomparable Fr. Zuhlsdorf quotes a liturgy director as saying "Say the Black, and Do the Red." In the Roman Missal there are things called "Rubrics." They are printed in red (ruber, Latin for red, red=ruby. Get it?) They are the directions for how to say Mass. There are words in black. They are what we are supposed to say.

For instance, one hears the phrase, "Pray, sisters and brothers." After all,

we want to be inclusive and affirmative so we must insert "sisters" and affirmatively put them first. The semi-literate drones that our institutions of higher learning now produce have no idea that "brethren" in English is the inclusive term, like "Geschwister" in German, which sounds like the word for sisters. When I am addressed at a German language Mass as Geschwistern I am not insulted. I don't imagine anyone is favoring women over men.

However, some that now seem to run things are afraid of insulting someone so they have to add "sister" and say it first to be on the safe side. They don't speak English very well and unaware that "Brethren" is an in inclusive term in modern English. (It is the archaic plural of "brother") Well, the text says "Pray, Brethren", not "Pray, sisters and brothers."

My suggestion is that you have one Mass at your parishes in which you allow people to go to a Mass at which the Black is said and the Red is done just one, Father. You can do your liturgical dancing and affirm your artistic side at the 11AM Mass. Just say the 9AM by the book, so that if a person wants to go to a Catholic Mass, she (or he) will have the opportunity to do so. I have always maintained that the faithful have a right to go to a Catholic Mass if they want to. It is your duty, Father, to provide at least one a Sunday. You can say a Mass later of which you are the star and during which you can let your inner poet out.

Now a word to my own brethren the stick in the mud, curmudgeonly, reactionary, traditional types. Lighten up on the New Mass. If you are one of those folks that think that the new Mass is somehow less, somehow not quite as holy, and worst of all, one of those who think it is not valid, it is here that we part company. Have you no trust in God? Do you think the Holy Spirit is incapable of guiding the Church? The New Mass, as I have described it and as the Council Fathers (sorry, there were no Council Mothers as far as I can tell) envisioned it, is a very beautiful thing.

They envisioned a reverent Mass with much Latin, traditional postures and gestures, with the celebrant facing the Lord, when appropriate, facing the people when appropriate. The new Mass was supposed to involve kneeling, genuflection and so on. They envisioned a Mass in which the treasury of sacred music continued and Gregorian chant had pride of place, though allowance was made for a limited use of local music for pastoral reasons provided that music was of an appropriate nature.

Well if all that's true, how have we ended up with the triumphalist, narcissistic, battle-of-the-bands lunacy that passes for liturgy? I have spent half a year explaining that and I am not going to repeat myself. I would however like to explain, at least in my own limited understanding, why we have the new Mass in the first place: Three simple words THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit anticipated the wild ride. Blessed Pope John and the Council Fathers invoked the Holy Spirit and convened the council, giving a mandate to streamline the liturgy; they could not have seen what the world would become in forty years. They could have known nothing of handheld computer phones so common that eight-year-olds would have them. Who could have imagined the world wide web, the fall of Marxism, a roaring Chinese economy and an heroic, growing Chinese Christianity, as well as a resurgent Islam, (though Hilaire Belloc had warned us.)

They couldn't have imagined, artificial birth control claimed as a civil right and enforced abortions as a civil duty. Would they have believed anyone who told them that filth would be available 24 hours a day on handheld televisions and that computer access to pornography would be defended by leftist librarians as a right even for children? They couldn't have imagined gay parades led by Irish Catholic mayors. They couldn't have imagined television commercials in prime time with nearly naked models hawking things to enhance etc. (family column). They would have wept to imagine the depravity of modern society and, infinitely worse, that some of the clergy would plunge themselves and the good name of Holy Mother Church into that sea of filth.

Certainly, they could not have imagined the collapse of education that was to afflict the generations raised by television sets and day care providers. Could they have possibly known that, in a wave of pseudo-tolerance, academic excellence would take a back seat to political correctness? Who knew that the great universities, secular and Catholic alike, would produce generations of culturally and sometimes functionally illiterate graduates who thought themselves brilliant?

Had the Council Fathers a clue, that forty years of politically correct, ideologically anti-Catholic religious education, largely taught and controlled by people who had turned their backs on religious life itself, would produce two whole generations of Catholics who learned nothing more about the faith than that Jesus loves me and this is how you hold your hands for first Communion? Who could have imagined that the heritage of two thousand years

of art and wisdom, of saints, martyrs and scholars would be threatened with extinction in the blink of an eye?

I'll tell you who THE HOLY SPIRIT! We live in a world that cannot chew gum and walk at the same time. We think we are brilliant, but we are among the stupidest generations in history. We think we are wise and knowing because we can do swell things with computer graphics and the latest software, but we moderns are the least personally productive and the least individually competent group of people since the fall of the Roman empire. When I was a lad, people still knew how to play musical instruments. Now they know how to play a radio. We listen to whatever music we please on handheld devices, but pull the plug and we are bored with the wind in the trees and the chirping of birds.

In the same vein, we can't spell, but we can access spell check. We can't add or subtract, but we can work a calculator. Have you ever been in a fast food restaurant when the computer is down? The pierced and painted sophisticates who work there can't make change for a five dollar bill! We don't talk to one another; we text short shallow messages. We can communicate by key board but there are precious few who can actually read or write handwritten messages. We don't know how to grow a potato or raise a chicken or build a chair. When the power goes out, and at some point it will, if human history is any indicator, millions and millions of suave urbanites will wander around indignant that the government is not doing anything and then they will starve to death.

I am not urging you to run to a commune in the mountains. Jesus said, "But when these things begin to take place, stand straight and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand." (Luke 21:28) Don't run for the mountains this time. Stay. Live among those who don't know the Lord, because they are going to need Him. If you abandon them, who will help them? The world has collapsed before and will collapse again.

For two thousand years, the Church has been the source and guardian of the civilization. Don't you think the Holy Spirit is still in charge? The great difference between the New Mass and the Old Mass is that the Holy Spirit designed the New Mass to be LINEAR. That's the whole difference. We live in a generation of intellectually-challenged electrified zombies who, as I mentioned earlier, can't walk and chew gum at the same time.

The old Mass was complex. The choir would do one thing, the celebrant another. There was time for quiet. There were things that happened that were unseen, unheard and unexplained. Earlier generations could perceive the sanctity and beauty of the ritual. When confronted by mystery, this generation says "Huh? I don't get it." So the Holy Spirit gave us a linear Mass. It is easy to understand, even if you are chewing gum.

Inspired by the same Holy Spirit, the Blessed John Paul and his successor, Benedict, have preserved the older more complex expression of the one sacrifice of Calvary for those to whom it is meaningful. At some times, for some people and in some places, the Latin Liturgy of John XXXIII is helpful. At some time, for some people and in some places the vernacular, linear Liturgy of Paul VI is helpful.

It is time for three things to happen.

1. Let us finally implement the council's directives by "Saying the Black, and Doing the Red."
2. It is time for liberals to finally be liberal and respect those for whom the traditional liturgy is meaningful.
3. And finally, it is time for people like me to stop harshing on people who are not capable of entering the mysticism of the old Mass.

As in the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors, the Holy Spirit has done something wonderful, despite the questionable motives of some of those He used. He has given the Latin Rite of the Church two liturgies, as in some of the Eastern Rites. We in the West now have the Liturgy of the Blessed John, which some call the Tridentine Mass, and the Liturgy of Paul VI which some people call the "Mass of Vatican Two" or "the New Mass" There are two widely available expressions of the Latin Rite, the Johannine Mass and the Pauline Mass. There is, however, no Hootenanny Mass, at least not in the vision of the Council.

I'm done now. I've gotten it all out and I feel better.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Know-it-all

PS Don't panic. The Rev. Know it all is not about to stop pontificating or fulminating. I think I will move on to the Rev. Know-it-all's "Guide to Reading the Bible, the Big Book on the Coffee Table" and perhaps a diatribe against Ayn Rand.